

**The proceedings of the Woman's Rights Convention, held at Worcester, October 15th and 16th, 1851**

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION, HELD AT WORCESTER, OCTOBER 15th AND 16th, 1851.

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**REPORT OF THE SECOND GENERAL CONVENTION OF FRIENDS OF WOMAN'S RIGHTS. -Wednesday, October 15th, 1851. MORNING SESSION.**

In accordance with a call from the Central Committee, appointed by the Convention of 1850, the Friends of Woman's Rights assembled in Worcester, at Brinley Hall, on Wednesday morning, Oct. 15, 1851. At an early hour the hall was filled.

The meeting was called to order by the chief of the Central Committee, Paulina W. Davis; who, upon motion of Dr. J. F. Flagg, of Boston, was appointed President *pro tem*.

The following list of Officers for the Convention was then presented, and unanimously adopted:—

**President.**

PAULINA W. DAVIS, Providence, R. I.

**Vice President.**

Angelina Grimke Weld, New Jersey

Wm. H. Channing, Boston.

Samuel J. May, Syracuse.

C. I. H. Nichols, Vermont.

Lucretia Mott, Philadelphia.

**Secretaries.**

Anna Q. T. Parsons, Boston.

Geo. W. Putnam, Lynn.

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**Business Committee.**

Emma R. Coe, Ohio.

Ernestine L. Rose, New York.

William H. Channing, Massachusetts.

Sarah H. Earle, "

William L. Garrison, "

Antoinette L. Brown, New York.

John G. Forman, Massachusetts.

C. I. H. Nichols, Vermont.

Abby K. Foster, Massachusetts.

Charles F. Hovey, "

Abby H. Price, "

William H. Fish, "

Harriet K. Hunt, Massachusetts.

Louisa Wait, "

Phebe Goodwin, Pennsylvania.

Elizabeth H. Prior, New York.

Josiah F. Flagg, Massachusetts.

Sarah L. Miller, Pennsylvania.

Joseph A. Dugdale, "

Anna Q. T. Parsons, Massachusetts.

Lucy Stone, "

Eliza H. Taft, "

Augustine C. Taft, "

### **Finance Committee.**

James N. Buffum, Lynn.

Ebenezer D. Draper, Hopedale.

Eliza A. Stowell, Worcester.

Sarah L. Miller, Pennsylvania.

On taking the chair, the President addressed the Convention as follows:—

The objects for which this Convention is called are now so well known and understood, that I need not occupy time in rehearsing them; let me rather call your attention to a brief notice of the progress of our cause since the first assemblage of the Friends of Woman's Rights, with such reflections as the review may suggest.

Some perception of our principles, and of the reasons and necessity of our movement, found a place among the community before any organized demonstration was made, just as "coming events cast their shadows before;" but the motives and feelings were indistinct and shadowy, feeble and confused, until minds devoted especially to the work undertook an efficient array of the required forces, and definite direction of the effort. The question was still comparatively a new one to the public one year ago. At that time, our call, which was everywhere published or noticed, helped by the previous agitation of the subject, awakened curiosity, and very decidedly and effectually fastened the public attention. There was enough in our propositions to surprise and arouse reflection; and when they were earnestly considered, there was found in them nothing to offend against sound morals and correct taste. If the movement was felt to be without precedent, example or parallel, it was also found to be without fatal defects.

Its warmest friends and most earnest advocates felt, as they were about to launch the new enterprise, that they were challenging sentiments and opinions which were wrought into the most intimate texture of all societary organizations, and that it could scarcely be hoped that any ordinary share of wisdom and prudence would escape the arousing of new antagonisms in defense of old abuses; they naturally feared that this movement would be received as but another disturbance of legitimate order, and themselves be regarded as ill-advised assailants of established usages, which time had justified and principles and authority approved; but they felt also, that their work would, in time, commend itself to every man's conscience, for they had devoted themselves not to overturn and to destroy, but to *re-form* and reconstruct, to embellish and beautify, that new order for which the world of changing things stands waiting. They were strong in assurance and high in hope, but well aware that it was no child's play to remove the rubbish and worn-out materials that had been gathering for centuries around the edifice which they had set themselves to remodel and adorn. Clinging poisonous ivy clustered thick on every cornice, and penetrated the casements; the mold of old decay stained the walls, and dampness and shadows flung from the ancient turrets and battlements shut out the light and warmth of the rising day from the precincts of the feudal structure.

It was but natural to expect prejudice, contempt and ridicule, with every form of opposition which ignorance, malignity and recklessness are accustomed to offer to reformations in their earliest determined presentment. Something of all this has been encountered, but greatly less than was anticipated, and would have been welcomed for the sake of the cause which provokes it; but, on the other hand, there has been an unusually candid examination and liberal construction accorded to our aims in quarters where such reception is most desirable and promising of good. There remains no doubt now that the discussions of our Conventions and their published proceedings have aroused, in some degree, that sort of inquiry into our doctrine of human rights which it demands. I

have said *Human Rights*, not *Woman's Rights*, for the relations, wants, duties, and rights of the sexes center upon the same great truth, and are logically, as they are practically, inseparable.

The general tone of public sentiment, as manifested by the leading papers of the day, is undergoing rapid change for the better. The reform is working itself into current legislation, so far, at least, that women's estates, heretofore vested in their husbands, and subjected to their control and liable for their debts, are receiving just protection in a number of the States, and generally increased regard in judicial decisions. Her own industrial earnings and her inherent political rights are still subject to usurpation, even where the laws are most liberal; but truth and right are in their nature entire, and the morning heralds the day when the light shall be completely divided from the darkness. During the year, the political, miscellaneous, and even the literary periodicals, have been giving our doctrines an effective publication; and the rights, which are higher than those which municipal laws and parchment charters can secure, are getting their due consideration. Conspicuous and noteworthy among these helpful agencies are Mrs. E. Oakes Smith's able essays, first published in one of our most popular journals, and extensively copied into other papers of our country. Also an extended and elaborate notice of our last year's proceedings in the July number of *The Westminster Review*.

This notice is in the main as candid in tone and spirit as it is thorough and able in discussion, and sound in its principles of criticism. With slight exceptions to the mere phraseology of our resolutions, the writer clearly and successfully vindicates every position which we assumed, and reaffirms and establishes the highest ground taken in principle and policy by our movement. The wide-spread circulation and high authority of this paper will tell well upon the public mind, for the truth there is in our cause, both in Europe and America. Not all the notices and criticisms we have met have been thus cordial, kind and candid. Some have found matter for mirth, some for sober and earnest hostility, and others for mere coarse abuse, in our demands; while others have found themselves only so far free as to insinuate our truth, or some portions of it, with non-committal prudence. But however our word is preached, whether "for wrath or conscience' sake," or without quite the courage and openness of either, one way or other, it is put into circulation under such modifications and forms as, happily, will adjust it to every variety of mind, and so prepare all for that fuller reception which the world will give it in due time. In the highways, in the convivial circle, at the work-bench, and around the family hearth, this great question, which lies at the very basis of our social system, is familiarly discussed, and it is all the while undergoing the severest scrutiny that the moralists and politicians of the age can give it. On every side the understanding is challenged to inquire, and the heart is constrained to act, upon the vital interests of humanity involved in the issue. Even to those who do not enter the open arena to do battle for or against the right, the great question is presented for decision, and its relations to all the interests of life are felt to be so intimate and so urgent, that

neutrality is made impossible. Men see that whatever is deepest in the principles of progress and reform necessarily involves it, and that it is not a mere voluntary or gratuitous controversy, but spontaneous and inevitable, a force which 9 delays not, nor turns aside to dispute or vituperate, but works on, and, so working, will fulfill its mission and achieve its purpose.

The participation of the pulpit we have not noticed in our brief allusions to the agencies in the field of this conflict; but it has not been altogether silent. With commendable fidelity to truth, some of our clergy have been pleading for justice and equity. Others have been put upon the defense of things as they are. The securities of the established order are essential to their position and standing. With them it is an instinct that their interests are safe only so long as "all things remain as they were since the fathers fell asleep," and they guard the world's slumbers as carefully as nurses watch the repose of the sick. But we should not in all cases suspect or impeach their motives; it is natural that old ideas and habits should survive the condition of things which produced them, as the shadows of night still hang over the valleys, when the hill-tops are already glowing in the early beams of the morning sun.

Among the signs of hopeful change is the prevailing inquiry whether all the opportunities of industrial occupation and its just emoluments are afforded to women, which they have a right to expect; and as a natural consequence of such inquiry, a more generous spirit is manifested in this direction. Since the first Woman's Rights Convention was held, the doors of several Medical Colleges have opened with a welcome to the long-excluded sex; others have been established for Women exclusively: some of them in special departments of the healing art; and one at least covering the whole ground of the general science, with a complete faculty, and chartered powers; and still another in which Women are teachers. This new phase of affairs has made its impression upon the minds of the profession, and the general community, and has already well-nigh subdued all opposition and resistance, except the very tenacious repugnance of an alarmed monopoly. Two years ago the idea of female physicians frightened the mob which takes care of the world's morals and manners from their propriety. But now it is beginning to be felt and owned that it is no less decent and delicate to prescribe for than to nurse the sick, and quite as feminine to practice medicine, as to be the helpless subjects and victims of that practice. All this is clear gain, and the pledge of still better and higher things.

I cannot now give deserved consideration to all the gains and indications of progress, but must not wholly overlook the Schools of Design opened for Women in Philadelphia and Boston, and it may be elsewhere; for this reform looks as if it were poured out upon the nation, and every day adds to its triumphs.

This new and rich field of enterprise so lately opened, is in itself the discovery of a new World, or the liberation of an old one to Women. Artistic education, appropriate, beautiful and liberal in its whole character and action, as well as fairly remunerative in pecuniary compensation, is thus added to the opportunities of classic culture in literature, for which a very few endowed institutions for Women are growing up beside the hundreds of colleges where men are provided with gratuitous education, at the public expense. This is a great thing as well as a new thing, and when conservatism has got done wondering at the first outbreak of generosity to the sex, perhaps it will begin to wonder at the bigoted and cruel injustice which so long withheld the right. Education in the arts of design opens upon us like a new beam of promise. All Women qualified for any of its varied departments, whose hands are now hanging down in despair, will find here profitable and adapted employment. The limits of Woman's ambition and aspiration are enlarged; the gratings of her prison windows widen, and let in a broader light, and another choice is afforded to relieve the monotony and repugnance of her hitherto servile and restricted range of industrial pursuits. If a year or two of our history registers such advancements as these, what will not the quick-coming future bring with it? The eyes that watched tearfully for the first faint beams of this light, shall yet be filled with the brightness of its consummate glory. The success which has thus far crowned our labor may well establish our faith, and renew our hope, and confirm our zeal. In this spirit let us address ourselves to the duties that are before us.

Letters were then read from Estelle Anna Lewis, Ann Elizabeth Brown, Sarah Tyndale, Dr. R. N. Moseley, R. W. Emerson, Henry Ward Beecher, Horace Mann, H. M. Darlington, Angelina Grimke Weld, Maria Hamman, O. S. Wait, A. Browne, Lydia A. Jenkins, Eliza Barney, Lydia F. Fowler, Marion Blackwell, Oliver Johnson, Frances D. Gage.\*

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\* The Publishing Committee regret their inability to print these letters, as they would too much increase the size and cost of this pamphlet.

Mrs. Emma R. Coe, chief of the Business Committee, reported in behalf of the Committee, and called upon Wendell Phillips, Esq., of Boston, to read the Resolutions, prepared for the consideration of the Convention.

Mr. Phillips, on rising to present the Resolutions, said: "I beg leave to state, in behalf of the Business Committee, to the Convention, that 11 they are aware that this series of Resolutions is of a somewhat argumentative character; but, in their opinion, at the present stage of this movement, and conscious, as they are, that the press throughout the country is wont to publish our Resolutions, and little more, it is our duty to embody in these Resolutions, as concisely and fully as possible, a statement of the ends we seek, and the grounds upon which we seek them, more at length than it is the custom for some causes and Conventions to do. This must be their apology for any length of

argument and statement in the Resolutions. Though they seem to be confined to one point, it is not that the Committee are unaware of the importance of other points, but that this they deem the most important, and wish it to be fully understood." He then read the Resolutions as follows:—

1. *Whereas*, according to the Declaration of Independence of the United States, all men are created equal and endowed with inalienable Rights to Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness; therefore, *Resolved*, That we protest against the injustice done to Woman, by depriving her of that Liberty and Equality which alone can promote Happiness, as contrary alike to the Principles of Humanity and the Declaration of Independence.
2. *And whereas*, according to an acknowledged principle of this Republic, Taxation without Representation is Tyranny; and whereas the Property of Woman is taxed like that of Man; therefore, *Resolved*, That it is an act of the greatest tyranny and usurpation to deprive Woman of her Rights of being represented—of participating in the formation of the Laws, and enjoying all civil privileges in an equal degree with Man.
3. *Resolved*, That while we would not undervalue other methods, the Right of Suffrage for Women is, in our opinion, the corner-stone of this enterprise, since we do not seek to protect woman, but rather to place her in a position to protect herself.
4. *Resolved*, That it will be woman's fault, if, the ballot once in her hand, all the barbarous, demoralizing, and unequal laws, relating to marriage and property, do not speedily vanish from the statute-book; and while we acknowledge that the hope of a share in the higher professions and profitable employments of society is one of the strongest motives to intellectual culture, we know, also, that an interest in political questions is an equally powerful stimulus; and we see beside, that we do our best to insure education to an individual, when we put the ballot into his hands; it being so clearly the interest of the community that one, upon whose decisions depend its welfare and safety, should both have free access to the best means of education, and be urged to make use of them.
5. *Resolved*, That we do not feel called upon to assert or establish the equality of the sexes, in an intellectual or any other point of view; it is enough for our argument that natural and political justice, and the axioms of English and American liberty, alike determine that rights and burdens—taxation and representation—should be co-extensive: hence women, as individual citizens, liable to punishment for acts which the laws call criminal, or to be taxed in their labor and property for the support of Government, have a self-evident and indisputable right, identically the same right that men have, to a direct voice in the enactment of those laws and the formation of that government.



6. *Resolved*, That the Democrat, or Reformer, who denies suffrage to women, is a Democrat only because he was not born a noble, and one of those levelers who are willing to level only down to themselves.

7. *Resolved*, That while political and natural justice accord civil equality to woman; while great thinkers of every age, from Plato to Condorcet and Mill, have supported their claim; while voluntary associations, religious and secular, have been organized on this basis; still, it is a favorite argument against it, that no political community or nation ever existed in which women have not been in a state of political and social inferiority. But, in reply, we remind our opponents that the same fact has been alleged, with equal truth, in favor of slavery—has been urged against freedom of industry, freedom of conscience, and the freedom of the press—none of these liberties having been thought compatible with a well-ordered State, until they had proved their possibility by springing into existence as facts. Beside, there is no difficulty in understanding why the subjection of woman has been a *uniform custom*, when we recollect that we are just emerging from the ages in which *might* has been always right.

8. *Resolved*, That we are firmly convinced that the division of mankind into two castes—one born to rule over the other—is, in the case of the sexes, as in all cases, an unqualified mischief, a source of perversion and demoralization, both to the favored class and to those at whose expense they are favored, producing none of the good which it is the custom to ascribe to it, and forming a bar, almost insuperable, to any really vital improvement, either in the character or in the social condition of the human race.

9. *Resolved*, That, so far from denying the overwhelming social and civil influence of women, we are fully aware of its vast extent; aware, with Demosthenes, that “measures which the Statesman has meditated a whole year, may be overturned in a day by a woman;” and for this very reason we proclaim it the very highest expediency to endow her with full civil rights, since only then will she exercise this mighty influence under a just sense of her duty and responsibility, the history of all ages bearing witness that the only safe course for nations is to add open responsibility wherever there already exists unobserved power.

10. *Resolved*, That we deny the right of any portion of the species to decide for another portion, or of any individual to decide for another individual, what is and what is not their “proper sphere;” that the proper sphere for all human beings is the largest and highest to which they are able to attain; what this is, cannot be ascertained without complete liberty of choice: woman, therefore, ought to choose for herself what sphere she will fill, what education she will seek, and what employment

she will follow; and not be held bound to accept, in submission, the rights, the education, and the sphere which man thinks proper to allow her.

11. *Resolved*, That we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; and we charge that man with gross dishonesty or ignorance, who shall contend that “men,” in the memorable document from which we quote, does not stand for the human race; that “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” are the “inalienable rights” of *half* only of the human species; and that, by “the governed,” whose consent is affirmed to be the only source of just power, is meant that *half* of mankind only, who, in relation to the other, have hitherto assumed the character of *governors*.

12. *Resolved*, That we see no weight in the argument that it is necessary to exclude women from civil life because domestic cares and political engagements are incompatible; since we do not see the fact to be in the case of man; and because, if the incompatibility be real, it will take care of itself, neither men nor women needing any law to exclude them from an occupation when they have undertaken another, incompatible with it: Second, we see nothing in the assertion that women, themselves, do not desire a change, since we assert that superstitions fears, and dread of losing men's regard, smother all frank expression on this point; and further, if it be their real wish to avoid civil life, laws to keep them out of it are absurd; no legislator having ever yet thought it necessary to compel people, by law, to follow their own inclination.

13. *Resolved*, That it is as absurd to deny all women their civil rights because the cares of household and family take up all the time of some, as it would be to exclude the whole male sex from Congress, because some men are sailors, or soldiers, in active service, or merchants whose business requires all their attention and energies.

The following letter from Harriet Martineau, of England, was then read by Mrs. Coe:—

Cromer, England, Aug. 3, 1851.

My Dear Madam:— I beg to thank you heartily for your kindness in sending me the Report of the Proceedings of your “Woman's Rights Convention.” I had gathered what I could from the newspapers concerning it, but I was gratified at being able to read, in a collected form, addresses so full of earnestness and sound truth as I found most of the speeches to be. I hope you are aware of the interest excited in this country by that Convention; the strongest proof of which is the appearance of an article on the subject in *The Westminster Review*, (for July,) 14 as thorough-going as any of your own

addresses, and from the pen (at least, as it is understood here) of one of our very first men, Mr. John S. Mill. I am not without hope that this article will materially strengthen your hands, and I am sure it cannot but cheer your hearts.

As for me, my thoughts and best wishes will be with you when you meet in October. I cannot accept your hearty invitation to attend your Convention, as my home duties will not allow of my leaving my own country. But you may be assured of my warm and unrestricted sympathy. Ever since I became capable of thinking for myself, I have clearly seen—and I have said it till my listeners and readers are probably tired of hearing it—that there can be but one true method in the treatment of each human being, of either sex, of any color, and under any outward circumstances—to ascertain what are the powers of that being, to cultivate them to the utmost, and *then* to see what action they will find for themselves. This has probably never been done for men, unless in some rare individual cases. It has certainly never been done for women; and, till it is done, all debating about what woman's intellect is, all speculation, or laying down the law, as to what is woman's sphere, is a mere beating of the air. *A priori* conceptions have long been found worthless in physical science, and nothing was really effected till the experimental method was clearly made out and strictly applied in practice; and the same principle holds most certainly through the whole range of Moral Science. Whether we regard the physical fact of what women are able to do, or the moral fact of what women ought to do, it is equally necessary to abstain from making any decision prior to experiment. We see plainly enough the waste of time and thought among the men who once talked of Nature abhorring a vacuum, or disputed at great length as to whether angels could go from end to end without passing through the middle; and the day will come when it will appear to be no less absurd to have argued, as men and women are arguing now, about what woman ought to do, before it was ascertained what woman can do. Let us once see a hundred women educated up to the highest point that education at present reaches—let them be supplied with such knowledge as their faculties are found to crave, and let them be free to use, apply and increase their knowledge as their faculties shall instigate, and it will presently appear what is the sphere of each of the hundred. One may be discovering comets, like Miss Herschel; one may be laying open the mathematical structure of the universe, like Mrs. Somerville; another may be analyzing the chemical relations of Nature in the laboratory; another may be penetrating the mysteries of physiology; others may be applying Science in the healing of diseases; 15 others may be investigating the laws of social relations, learning the great natural laws under which society, like everything else, proceeds; others, again, may be actively carrying out the social arrangements which have been formed under these laws; and others may be chiefly occupied in family business, in the duties of the wife and mother, and the ruler of a household. If, among the hundred women, a great diversity of powers should appear, (which I have no doubt would be the case,) there will always be plenty of scope and material for the greatest amount and variety of power that can be brought out. If not—if it should appear that women fall below men in all but the

domestic functions—then it will be well that the experiment has been tried; and the trial had better go on for ever, that woman's sphere may for ever determine itself, to the satisfaction of everybody.

It is clear that Education, to be what I demand on behalf of women, must be intended to issue in active life. A man's medical education would be worth little, if it was not a preparation for practice. The astronomer and the chemist would put little force into their studies, if it was certain that they must leave off in four or five years, and do nothing for the rest of their lives; and no man could possibly feel much interest in political and social morals, if he knew that he must, all his life long, pay taxes, but neither speak nor move about public affairs. Women, like men, must be educated with a view to action, or their studies cannot be called Education, and no judgment can be formed of the scope of their faculties. The pursuit must be the life's business, or it will be mere pastime or irksome task. This was always my point of difference with one who carefully cherished a reverence for woman—the late Dr. Channing. How much we spoke and wrote of the old controversy—Influence vs. Office! He would have had any woman study anything that her faculties led her to, whether physical science, or law, government and political economy; but he would have her stop at the study. From the moment she entered the hospital as physician, and not nurse; from the moment she took her place in a court of justice in the jury-box, and not the witness-box; from the moment she brought her mind and her voice into the legislature, instead of discussing the principles of laws at home; from the moment she enounced and administered justice, instead of looking upon it from afar, as a thing with which she had no concern—she would, he feared, lose her influence as an observing intelligence, standing by in a state of purity, “unspotted from the world.” My conviction always was, that an intelligence never carried out into action could not be worth much; and that, if all the action of human life was of a character so tainted as to be unfit for 16 women, it could be no better for men, and we ought all to sit down together to let barbarism overtake us once more. My own conviction is, that the natural action of the whole human being occasions not only the most strength, but the highest elevation; not only the warmest sympathy, but the deepest purity. The highest and purest beings among women seem now to be those who, far from being idle, find among their restricted opportunities some means of strenuous action; and I cannot doubt that, if an active social career were open to all women, with due means of preparation for it, those who are high and holy now would be high and holy then, and would be joined by an innumerable company of just spirits from among those whose energies are now pining and fretting in enforced idleness or unworthy frivolity, or brought down into pursuits and aims which are anything but pure and peaceable. In regard to this old controversy—of Influence vs. Office—it appears to me that, if Influence is good and Office is bad for human morals and character, Man's present position is one of such hardship as it is almost profane to contemplate; and if, on the contrary, Office is good and a life of Influence is bad, Woman has an instant right to claim that her position be amended.

With every wish that your meeting may be a happy one, and your great cause a flourishing one, I am, dear Madam, yours, faithfully, Harriet Martineau.

After reading the foregoing letter, Mrs. Coe said that she believed the statement of Miss Martineau, in regard to the authorship of the article in the *Westminster Review*, was erroneous. She had understood, from what was considered good authority, that the article was written by a lady—the mother of J. Stewart Mill. She wished to give honor where honor was due.

The Resolutions offered by the Business Committee being open for discussion, a few introductory remarks were made by Dr. Martin, of Worcester, who was followed by Charles List, Esq., of Boston, upon "The Rights of Man, and the Duty of Woman to redress his Wrongs." He asserted that women fell far short now of exerting the high moral influence which was intrusted to them, as Mothers and Wives, and that consequently men were imperfectly developed in their higher nature. Mr. List concluded, in substance, as follows:—"I trust you will understand my position. I lately saw a book, wherein the author, in a very eloquent but too high-wrought sentence, speaks of woman as 'the connecting link between man and heaven.' But this asks too much, and I deny the right of woman to assume such a prerogative. All that I would claim is, that woman should be raised by noble aspirations to the loftiest moral elevation, and thus be fitted to train man up to become a worthy companion for the pure, high-minded being which every woman should strive to be. A great duty rests upon woman, and it becomes you to lose not a moment in securing for yourselves every privilege and right, whereby you may be elevated, and so prepared to exert the influence which man so much needs."

To this appeal, Mrs. C. I. H. Nichols of Brattleboro, Vt., rejoined, by saying: "Woman has been waiting for centuries, expecting man to go before her and lift her up. But he has not done it. Now comes the call that she should first grasp hold of heaven, and strive to drag man after her!" And Mrs. Coe followed with a few spirited words to the effect, "That the signs were truly propitious, when man begins to complain of his wrongs, and to demand his rights of woman! Women not fit to be Wives and Mothers! Who placed them in their present position; who keeps them there? Let a woman demand the highest education in our land, and what college, with the exception of Oberlin, will receive her? I have myself lately made such a demand and been refused, simply on the ground of sex. Yet what is there in the highest range of intellectual pursuits, to which woman may not rightfully aspire? What is there, for instance, in Theology, which she should not strive to learn? Give me only that in Religion, which woman may and should become acquainted with. The rest may go, like chaff before the wind." (Loud cheers.)

On motion, the Convention adjourned still 2 P. M.

## AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Convention met at 2 o'clock. The Hall was completely filled, seats and aisles being crowded to their utmost capacity, with an audience whose character and intelligence gave proof that the subject of "Woman's Rights" has taken a deep hold upon the feelings of the community.

Mrs. Coe read a letter to the Convention from Mrs. Stanton, of Seneca Falls, N. Y., and followed the reading with an eloquent speech, which she closed by reading the following Resolutions prepared by Mrs. Stanton and herself:—

*Resolved*, That so weighty is the influence of Property in modern society, that we cannot reasonably look for the emancipation of one sex or the elevation of the other, while Woman occupies her present position in regard to property—a mere dependent in too many cases on the bounty and care of man.

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*Resolved*, That since the economy of the household is generally as much the source of family wealth as the labor and enterprise of man, therefore the wife should, during life, have the same control over the joint earnings as her husband, and the right to dispose at her death of the same proportion of it as he.

*Resolved*, That the hearty thanks of the women of this country are due to that noble Englishwoman, Mrs. Mill, who gave to the world through the medium of the *Westminster Review* that able exposition of our rights, and that complimentary review of our last Convention. We give her the right hand of fellowship.

*Resolved*, That the greatest difficulty now in our path is a stinted purse; and to remove this there is but one way, for every woman interested in this reform to seek out as speedily as possible some legitimate way of getting money. Work is worship. Go, get you gold by honest toil.

*Resolved*, That woman must seek out a new order of employments, to secure for herself virtue and independence; marriage and the needle, heretofore her only resources, are crushing to both.

*Resolved*, That it is the duty of the women of our day to study enough of the abstruse science of surveying, to define if possible the boundaries of "their own sphere," that men be no longer compelled to keep them informed of its limits.

*Resolved*, That it is our duty to prescribe a sphere for man, where his superior mental and physical endowments may have free scope; his present position, in a counting-room or editor's chair, in a crowded metropolis, being altogether too circumscribed for his boundless capacity. Such places belong more legitimately to woman.

On motion, these Resolutions were laid on the table for future discussion.

Mrs. Abby H. Price, of Hopedale, Mass., in behalf of the Committee on Industrial Avocations, then read the following Report:—

We assume the position that all human beings, in order to fulfill their highest destiny, should be usefully and agreeably employed. That the right to liberty of choice with regard to avocation, is equally inherent in male and female.

Therefore to restrict Woman to a few industrial pursuits, prescribing for her a certain sphere of action, is to infringe upon her natural rights, and is a direct injury to her physical and moral nature. We hold also, that Man and Woman should alike be encouraged by the Institutions and usages of society, to make themselves useful to the fullest extent of their ability. To this end, no inferiority tending to the depreciation of Woman's labor, or recognizing impropriety in her engaging in any 19 pursuit to which she may feel attracted, in subserviency of course to the moral law, should be tolerated.

Both sexes should stand as equal aspirants for excellence, in any department of intellectual and industrial life to which they may be capable of attaining. We believe, also, that only within a social superstructure, based upon these self-evident truths, can the sexes blend harmoniously and virtuously their different and peculiar characteristics. We find society constituted and acting in direct violation of this coequality of human rights. Woman's sphere is limited, and prescribed for her by public sentiment, and restricted to a few industrial avocations; these generally of an inferior grade, and affording so small a remuneration, that men pass by them with scorn. To make this clear, we will briefly glance at her present position.

We find Woman, in all heathen countries, a *slave*, a beast of burden, always treated by man as an inferior, and excluded from his companionship in the most cherished objects of his life, while she is compelled to endure the hardships of the severest toil. Although more delicate in her physical organization, she is made, by man's greater power, subservient to his wishes, and obliged to do his bidding in the performance of the most menial drudgery. Her female infants are destroyed with impunity, and her existence allowed only as an appendage to man's; while at his death she is frequently consumed upon his funeral pile. Her labors and endurance in such countries prove that



she is equal to great hardships and exertions when thus early trained. As civilization advances, she has fewer burdens, perhaps, placed upon her, although her rights of labor, encouragements and remuneration are far from being equal. Wherever she is allowed to labor side by side with man in the same pursuits, for services equally well executed, she is paid not more than half as much. In no country, even the most civilized and enlightened, are industrial occupations opened to Woman with the same facilities for operations, the same encouragements for success, and the same stimuli to excellence and greatness. Woman is expected to be frail, delicate and dependent in order to be loved. She must be thus lovely to expect marriage, and she must be married to have a home and a subsistence. Hence she is limited to an inferior circle of industry, in which she can act only in helpless dependence upon Man's wiser guidance, and preserve her feminine character, the beauty of which consists in graceful weakness, timidity, and submission to the conventionalisms of life. In this condition she must patiently continue until some favorable circumstance affords her an opportunity of yielding up her personal identity and becoming a "*Femme Covert*" for the sake of a 20 sure living! Thus marriage for a home becomes frequent, necessarily so, from the proscriptions under which Woman suffers. Should she attempt to make herself independent and self-supporting, she would be pronounced "out of her sphere," "masculine" and unlovely, and have less prospect of sustaining the beautiful relation of wife and mother. No one can doubt the demoralizing influence such a position must have over Woman's higher nature, nor its disastrous effects upon human happiness and elevation.

*Not so with Man.* To *him*, Science and Industry, blending in beautiful harmony, open their thousand avenues, alluring him onward and upward, over their bright and pleasant pathway, to the very summit of human excellence. While they ask of Woman, if she would enter their higher precincts, only to accept of such of their gifts as will make her more agreeable to Man, for whom only she was made; and to whom, if she fails to get an honorable alliance, her womanhood is sacrificed, an offering more ignoble even than that laid upon the funeral pile of a deceased husband. Thus has *Might* triumphed over *Right*, and muscle and strength have taken for themselves the best.

Assuming this superiority, Man has claimed all excellence, all profit, all laurels, and the *person*, even, of his weaker companion. Woman's labor has been *underrated*. The few avocations open to her have been crowded to excess by competition; work for Woman is consequently scarce and hard to be obtained, while the remuneration afforded for services well rendered, and valuable, is but a miserable pittance, compared to the same amount of labor performed by the male sex. The average earnings of seamstresses are not more than thirty cents per day, while those employed in paper mills and factories average but barely enough to sustain them from week to week. Very few of the best weavers are enabled to deposit some of the avails of their labor in savings banks, for the future; but this is so seldom, that wherever an exception occurs of this kind, and a factory girl,



after years of toil, has saved to the amount of a thousand dollars, it becomes an item of newspaper interest, and is wondered at as most extraordinary! But very few, however, who throng the crowded paths frequented by Woman's patient feet, are enabled to save anything for the contingencies of the future, so that, deplorable and chilling as the thought is, the unfortunate, the worn-out, or the discouraged, must resort to crime or starve. Well authenticated statistics have proved to the public, through the columns of both London and New-York papers, that two-thirds of the abandoned and dissolute women were driven to their life of infamy by sheer necessity, by actual want! One-third are those reared in helpless idleness, seduced, and abandoned; while a large part of the remainder are those who sought in vain for employment and the means of an honest subsistence. Of those who are successful in obtaining employment, the scanty pay obliges most to devote an unreasonable number of hours to their labor, thus dragging out a miserable existence and wearing out their lives for bread! Young women who would earn their living in any of the pursuits that the popular voice pronounces proper for women, must work not only from sun to sun, but from the sun till the "moon herself grows pale and cold and sinks in the western wave." Yes, the chivalrous *movers* of human events, the governors of the race, in return for woman's graceful submission to her prescribed sphere, impose upon her burdens the most oppressive, toil the most incessant, and a life the most barren and objectless; compelling her to neglect the noble culture of the soul, and to bend its angel-powers only to propel the needle. The highest incentives to action are withheld from her darkened sky, leaving no dreams of future greatness to arouse, no vision of wealth, coming with garnered treasures, to bless and elevate others; no hopes of political preferment, conferring its mighty influence for righteousness and truth, ever flash across her pathway. The only hope of her cheerless life must be marriage—upon which she must fix her thought, as upon a polar star, not in a calm and healthful attention to the relation as a matter of choice and principle, preparing herself nobly to sustain the relations of wife and mother, but with an intense sickly fear that she shall not have an offer, consequently no home and no worthy object in life. Thus is society demoralized and crime perpetuated, until shrieking womanhood, from the dark depths of despair, cries out, "Give us an equal chance, or your proscriptions and oppressions will poison the very fountains of all prosperity." Woman has by this denial of her freedom been dwarfed in her ability to perform.

It is a law of both mind and muscle that disuse destroys power, and also that the human mind needs the *stimuli* of varied and comprehensive objects to arouse its complicated energies. The progress of development depends upon circumstances; although every gift bestowed by the Creator brings with it a right for its use, yet favorable circumstances are required to call forth and improve each natural endowment. Place an infant in a dungeon, shut entirely away from all the active scenes of life, and he comes out a Casper Hauser. So, to a great extent, is it with Woman.

A large part of her nature has had no development—no culture. Man has appropriated what he has coveted of her God-given faculties to his use; and the rest has been blighted by the frost of a scornful public sentiment, and the world has slighted and contemned an energy which would have elevated Man to the purest bliss of Eden. Giant Prejudice has palsied the hand that, long ere this, would have made sweet music on the discordant keys of human life, and the true woman now bleeds at the foot of a chained and helpless, yet petted idol! Had Woman been aroused by the same encouragement to great endeavor, had she been in circumstances to realize the same necessity for invention, construction and perfection, with her fine organization, she might have dazzled the world with the bright creations of her genius,—and *she* too have had a Raphael, a Fulton, and a Morse; but her position, crushed beneath the iron hand that has rested so heavily upon her, has allowed but here and there an uprising of Woman's nature; but here and there a gleam of what she might be and do, were she allowed an even chance to sustain her claim to Man's equal companionship.

We now see her weak, narrowed in her views and aspirations, cowered before public sentiment, reverent to excess of the "*Powers that be*," reduced in physical energies, and overloaded and crushed by the burdens that Fashion and the Customs of Society place upon her. We see the poor starving for the want of well-paid employment, and rushing to crime for bread; we see the rich and affluent sickly and degenerate for the want of motive to induce vigorous action; we see young women giving to one idea the strongest purposes of their youth; we see the married over-taxed by the cares of too numerous families, and cowered before the acknowledged inferiority of the worth of their continual toil into a partial slavery, claiming no right to a full and equal partnership in the income of the family, but stooping to stealth and maneuver to gratify her individual wishes. We see all alike, because they are *Women*, denied the right of Franchise and Political Liberty, thus stripped of particular interest in the public weal which might have afforded change to life's weary routine, and "change is rest."

True, she may be educated; but what is knowledge without practice? It has no powers to satisfy the capabilities of the ever active mind, that were created for use, and which also are allied to muscles that demand exercise.

Now what is the remedy for all these evils? We believe that Woman needs not only Education, equal and thorough, but that all industrial avocations should be thrown open to her. Give her a chance to see what she may find herself capable of *doing* and *being*, without the danger of making herself an outcast or a ridiculous eccentric. If she be by nature unfitted for anything in which the other sex excel, her attractions will lead her aright; while only by a liberty of choice can she establish and sustain true womanly dignity and independence.

Your Committee believe that Woman should, if she chooses, become acquainted with the mechanical trades, and that many of the lighter branches of each trade she could, with or without machinery, execute. We believe that agricultural interests should also welcome woman to delightful partnerships; and that such as do not choose the care of families or domestic employment, should have the pleasure of exchanging their own golden harvests for the elegancies of art, and of bestowing Earth's bountiful productions for themselves upon the weak and disabled poor.

The professions, also, should open to such as may choose. The study of *Law*, of Medicine, and of Theology, would, of course, well befit her character, if to them she were attracted. Her fine moral susceptibilities must render her more acute and sensible to the claims of Justice; and when her own sex were concerned, she could better judge, apprehending better their temptations and weakness, while her sympathy and affection would give pathos and eloquence to her voice in pleading for the condemned innocent.

The objection that the practice of the professions would interfere with the duties of maternity can apply, of course, only to mothers; while their free access might prevent many unfitted, and unqualified, from assuming that sacred relation, prompted by unworthy motives. Thus it becomes necessary that Woman should have pecuniary independence, and a fair chance for pleasant occupation, in order for her to become true to her own nature in the holiest relations of life. Man has little reason to confide in an alliance consented to under such circumstances as the present social relations present. Gratitude for an offer may deceive even herself, and both mistake some semblance of love for that true and holy affinity which alone can secure a happy union. Therefore she must have her choice in industrial and professional life, and be encouraged to become all she can become; even though she compete successfully with Man, and take the honor from his brow. If she show herself skillful in the trades, employ her, and pay her accordingly. If she exhibit business talent and supervisional address, share with her copartnerships and ownerships.

Open to her all posts of honor and responsibility. Give her, also, a fair share in governmental offices: such as require much writing, she might equally as well fill; then let such as are qualified of either sex be equally eligible. And after she has matured her reason, in the study of law, and is prepared to manage as judiciously its devious wisdom, give her the patronage and the praise. If she prove herself as humane and as scientific as a physician, employ and confide in her; and if she warn 24 as faithfully against destroying sins and win as eloquently to the practice of love and holiness as a gospel minister, give her the care of your parishes and your churches. The services of each of these professions are received equally by male and female. Why then should not both assume responsibilities in their administration?

All of life's higher aims that are calculated to arouse, and call forth the energies of her soul, must be placed before her. Thus will her capabilities be unfolded and her character be elevated. Increasing self-respect and consciousness of responsibility will give strength to her character and expanse to her nature. She will, with her warmer sympathies and intenser soul, become public-spirited and philanthropic. Her influence over man will cease to be the conservative, selfish influence that it is at present. She will transmit to her offspring a nobler nature. The race, through her, will improve, and man will no longer be the effeminate, dough-faced cringer before arrogance and assumption, but dignity and manliness will rest alike on man and woman.

The governing power, the restorative power, the industrial power, they will share together, and bear as equals the crown of an elevated humanity. Then will redeemed woman form her soul-alliances when she is attracted by affection alone, and inefficient wives and unhappy homes be seldom seen.

A great change is to be wrought in public sentiment ere this "better time arrives," to the rapid progress of which there exist many obstacles.

*1. Woman's general contentedness in the position at present assigned her.*

This is often brought forward by opposers as an argument against an extended sphere. So it is said the Southern slaves are contented in their condition, which, were it *true*, would only prove greater the evil of their enslavement. The Turkish female is quite willing to be veiled and secluded in harems with jealous care, and believes a woman who speaks to a male acquaintance, other than her husband, outrages the delicacy of her sex, and deserves public condemnation.

This fact proves either her gentle, confiding nature—thus rendering her oppressions the more ungenerous and unmanly—or it proves her weakness and slavish subjection, and thus shows how dangerous and degrading is the injustice done her.

*2. Another obstacle is her physical weakness.*

That the progress of civilization has tended to weaken Woman physically no one can doubt, who glances over the world as it is. The practical Physiologist, probably, could assign many reasons for this. 25 We will only state here that probably confinement to sedentary pursuits, devotion to fashion and dress, and the lesser call for vigorous muscular exertion, are the chief causes of the decline of female health. This obstacle can be removed gradually by attention to the causes, for weakness and disease are not necessarily attendant upon *true* refinement and *true* culture; and although the fact exists painfully apparent, it only proves the existence also of a wrong in connection with the increase of knowledge. Woman, with Man, must attend to the laws of their physical being, and

make obedience paramount in importance, for no beauty of finish can ornament a temple built of diseased humanity.

3. *Another obstacle in the way of Woman's industrial redemption, is the inconvenient style of her attire.*

That the present long-flowing skirt is a serious impediment to her efficiently engaging in many productive branches of useful industry, must be admitted. The experience of all who have made the trial has been, that the healthful and agreeable business of Agriculture and Horticulture cannot be prosecuted with pleasure and advantage with her shroud-like drapery about her feet and limbs. Mechanical labor, especially that requiring the use of machinery, would with greater difficulty be accomplished, and in many cases would be attended with great danger, from its preventing a free use of her limbs, and also its liability to be caught in the machinery. Consequently Woman is at present to a great extent unfitted by her *dress* for self-support and independence; she is almost necessarily restricted to sedentary pursuits by this attire, and although not the cause of this restriction, yet it is a style that she long ago would have discarded, had she had equal rights to employment according to choice, and as many and as noble objects placed before her for personal achievement.

These obstacles and many others present themselves in our way, all of which we can ourselves overcome and remove. The public mind is to be changed, and in this work *Woman* has much to do. Her redemption she must *herself* achieve, and to this end she must *sacrifice* and *labor*. No despotism was ever overthrown without heroism and suffering. Humanity has struggled bravely and long against tyranny, and thought no sacrifice *too* great to endure in republican revolutions. Civil and religious freedom have floated thus far over rivers of noble blood, and let us not expect that a tyranny so hoary and deep-seated as that which holds Woman in thrall, being the production of Man's physical strength and nourished by his grosser affections, will give way without *determined*, and resolute, and heroic efforts. Woman, as she begins to see her wrongs, must begin also seriously and resolutely to overthrow them—not to overpower and dethrone Man, but to assume her true place and accomplish her own elevation and freedom. A fearful and momentous responsibility rests upon the few who now act as pioneers in a reform to accomplish so gigantic a work. Every inch of ground she may *gain* she must *improve*. Meeting in convention and complaining of grievances, or proving equality of rights, will not secure to her the desired good, unless she herself *act* promptly to take her rightful position, and assume her responsibility as fast as she may be able. Is her love of approbation in the way of this? Then this “right eye must be plucked out.” To do her duty may cost her much, at first, that she holds dear. Cherished habits are, perhaps, to be overcome, hardships to be endured by way of experiment, position in society to be sacrificed, taste, the growth of the most refined culture, laid upon the altar of a greater good. Fashion must receive no longer her best

offerings; but firmly and steadily, yet with dignity and love, she must prepare herself for the greatest usefulness, which is her highest mission. Perhaps the item for her to *begin* to do may seem too small to notice. She may first be called on to omit homage to some household god for the acquirement of health and strength by out-door exercise. It may be her duty to lift up her voice in public for her more needy sisters. It may be her duty, although no necessity rest upon her of a pecuniary nature, to exercise some peculiar gift in new and what may be thought “mannish” business, thus opening doors for others less fortunate. It may be her duty to give individual example to some humble reform, although she herself need not its advantage. The *encouragement* to immediate and direct action is great. No personal self-sacrifice was ever made in vain when prompted by pure and holy motive. What Woman has already achieved for herself may be looked upon as an omen of future good. The noble efforts, the self-sacrificing life of one Woman in the Anti-Slavery cause, have almost alone won for Woman the right of free speech. Thanks, then, free and strong, to the glorious *few* who *have acted!* Let Woman's deepest gratitude gush forth in pure and reverent affection to them; for victories won are never lost—and the triumph already attained for her higher nature in the change already wrought in the public mind is a prophecy of glory in the future, bright as an angel's smile. The advance since the first Convention was held has been unparalleled. Let us, then, be brave and true to our highest ideal. We see the fields white and ready for the harvest. We see everything to be done. *Now* comes the necessity for the *action*. The few who see first the path must, walk therein, leaving the multitude to follow. Woman has but just raised her voice, feebly saying, “Have *we* not the same inalienable rights?” and 27 Justice, through her silver trumpet, has sounded over the world's tumult, “*You have.*” The discordant elements caught the sound and listened. Now let her firm and united ranks appear, with a white banner given to the breeze— *Freedom and Love*, her attendant angels, and Truth, her only weapon. So shall the waters of usurpation and tyranny separate, and woman walk in peace and joy to the possession of her new inheritance.

Miss Lucy Stone then addressed the Convention:—

I wish to say a word in relation to the remarks made this morning by Mr. List.

I think it is not without reason that men complain of the wives and mothers of to-day. But man takes woman for better or for worse, and perhaps it is a question where the fault mainly lies. But this question need not be considered here. Let us look the fact soberly and fairly in the face, and admit that there *is* occasion to complain of the wives and mothers of to-day. But while I say this, let me also say, that where you can show one woman who is what she ought to be as a wife and mother, you can show not more than one man who is what he should be as a husband and father. The blame is on both sides. Is there any one here who does not believe there is something wrong in home influence? Why, friends, you have but to open your eyes, and see the people of to-day as they are, to



be convinced. Go where men exert their influence, and you will see that the deeds they do are such as never could have been done by sons who have had worthy mothers. Go to Washington, into the Capitol, and look at the deeds that are done there. See the oppression, and wickedness, and malice that are contained in the Fugitive Slave enactment, and tell me if the men who passed such a law are sons of worthy mothers! Oh, if the mothers of the men who enacted that law had been mothers indeed, if they had had wives who were wives indeed, I tell you, they never would have done it. We need no higher proof of the unfitness of mothers for their responsible duties, than comes to us in the deeds that are done by the sons and the daughters of to-day.

Wherever you find men tyrannical, you will find women triflers. Go through the streets in Worcester, and look in at the shop windows, and see the display of goods which the merchant knows will be called for most. See the silks, and the satins, and the velvets—the laces, and fringes, and edgings—as though we were walking show-cases, and loved only to decorate the outside, while the immortal part of us is left without care or cultivation. The true want of the United States is the influence of good wives and mothers, to make man the noble and high-minded creature fitted to live in this nineteenth century. The present state of things grows out of the idea that woman is to live solely as a companion for man. In interest, in object, in hope, there is, there can be no difference between them. But so long as woman retains the idea that she is only to be a companion for man, so long will she seek those things which will please him. And what have been those things? To please the taste of man, she has consented to crowd her body with whalebone and steel, until the capacity of her chest was confined to a space hardly big enough for a wasp. And to please him, with the spirit of a martyr, she has put on corsets, and drawn the strings until the soul was crowded out of her body. Miserable delusion! But it was to please the men. While woman is trained to believe that the chief end of her existence is to get married, she will continue to strive to make herself of such a character as will please the taste of those who seek for wives in the shape of wasps and hour-glasses. So long as women are kept dependent on man, is it to be wondered at that they sometimes marry from interest and not from affection—wed the purse and not the man? A true companionship must be prompted by an interest over which the parties have no control, to be interrupted only when that companionship is exchanged for a paradise. But aside from the idea of companionship, we read in the newspapers, we are taught at the fireside, and at the female seminary, that we must seek to obtain those graces and accomplishments which will make us better pleasing to the men. My soul loathes such meanness with perfect loathing! If there were no being in the world for her to influence, I would, for the sake of her own deathless nature, insist that, for herself alone, woman should receive the highest mental cultivation of which she is capable.

If it was not beneath Infinite Wisdom in the creation to construct the complex mechanism of woman's body, if it was not beneath Him to furnish it with nerves, and lungs, and brain, and send

through it the warm life-blood, and finally to breathe into that body the breath of life, and to impart to it a living soul, it assuredly cannot be beneath her to give to it that cultivation which shall make it grow up to the full stature of perfect womanhood, and fit it to understand its true relations with the human beings around it.

When we add to what woman ought to be for her own sake, this other fact, that woman, by reason of her function of maternity, must exert a most potent influence over the generations yet to be, there is no language that can speak the magnitude or importance of the subject that has called us together. He is guilty of giving to the world a 29 dwarfed humanity, who would seek to hinder this movement for the elevation of woman; for she is as yet a starved and dependent outcast before the law. In government, she is outlawed, having neither voice nor part in it. In the household, as was truly said by Mrs. Coe, she is either a ceaseless drudge or a blank. In the department of education, in industry, let woman's sphere be bounded only by her own capacity. We desire that there should be no walls thrown about it. Let man read his own soul, and turn over the pages of his own Book of Life, and learn that in the human being there is always capability of expansion; and then let him trust woman to that power of growth, no matter what says nay. Laying her hand upon the helm, let woman steer straight onward to the fulfillment of her own destiny. Let her ever remember that in following out the high behests of her own soul will be found her exceeding great reward.

Be assured, my friends, that this movement is not to end when this meeting adjourns. When we go from this Convention, let us, as truehearted women, relying upon our own energies, courageously and devotedly seek the attainment of all our rights, and make the world realize the fact that we are integral members in human society. 'Tis not in our stars, friends, but in ourselves, that we are slaves.

I would not disclaim the help of those noble men who are around us to-day. Very grateful are we that they are willing to coöperate with us. But, after all, I say, we are our own best helpers. Men cannot fully feel the misery of our lot. They cannot speak what we have *felt*. It is not for the abolitionist, however deeply he may feel the iniquity of the Fugitive Slave Law, fully to portray its wickedness, but the fugitive slave, fleeing from the prison-house of bondage—it is for him to have a realizing sense of its terrors. Who does not feel, when listening to the eloquent and burning words of that heroic slave and noble man, Frederick Douglass, that the bitter wrong of slavery has roused in his spirit the power to do the work he has done so bravely? A young man, when he goes forth over the threshold of his childhood's home, to take his part in active life, looks abroad over the wide world's arena, and sees no height to which he may not aspire; no place of honor which he may not fill. No matter how poor or lowly born, his opportunities are as large as his aspirations. But his sister, when she, too, goes forth to make her way in the world, finds the objects of her aspirations limited to two or three. There is the school-house, and there is household drudgery, and there is the chair of the seamstress;



and when you have mentioned these, you have marked the limit of woman's aspiration. Who can tell the sickening, paralyzing, deadening 30 power of her sensations, who, when standing up in life's spring, and looking abroad for some place of usefulness in the world, finds her scope narrowed to the petty details of domestic life, or to that wasting toil which works from early day to early day again, for a bare pittance wherewith to sustain life? Man can never know the deadening weight which falls on woman at the contemplation of such a prospect—for his field is bounded only by his powers.

It is not only women who find themselves, in the middle of their days, without adequate means of support, who come to our meeting. I could point you to a young woman in Beverly, whose taste runs naturally to sculpture. She has executed a bust of Robert Rantoul, Sen, which has been warmly praised as a likeness and a work of art. There is talent in that woman that might equal Powers. She might not, perhaps, give us a Greek slave woman, but (what would be more appropriate for this American nation) a Southern slave woman, that should speak to the justice and humanity of her countrymen. But this talent cannot be encouraged in her. The bust stands there in Beverly, a monument of her taste and skill; but she must go back to her upholstery. We want this woman to come here and speak to us of what the heart feels when the knell of dead hopes is rung. We want the widow to come here and tell us her feelings when the husband has gone to the spirit world, and the articles of the household must be appraised and sold, and the home itself left destitute.

Friends, we are our own helpers. I want every one of you to feel that this work rests upon us. Instead of asking, "Give us this, or give us that," let us just get up and take it. (Loud cheers.) If you have a thought that seeks expression, utter it boldly. If you remember the millions of slaves as you ought to remember them, and your heart prompts you to plead for these millions, speak out fearlessly. If your taste is to sculpture, work out your bust, and let it stand there to speak for itself until it shall speak for you. No matter what it be that you wish to do, if it be high and noble, go and do it. When we can do this, our acts will be living epistles, known and read of all men. We owe it to those noble men and women who, in this country, have made themselves living sacrifices on the altar of humanity, that we have before us and around us these soul-cheering indications,—earnest men and women, gathered to take this subject into consideration. Let us not fear the cross, but take it on our own shoulders, and walk up another Calvary, knowing that the world will be saved by it. (Loud cheers.)

Dr. Longshore, from the Female Medical College of Philadelphia, 31 here read portions of an address on the Position and Duties of Woman. After which,

Mrs. Rebecca Spring, of Brooklyn, N.Y., said: "A remark has been dropped by one of the speakers, representing woman as often seeking marriage from interest, rather than from affection. I believe this is rarely true, and I have always wondered that, under present circumstances, women

should retain so much disinterestedness and affection in their hearts. I have known young girls, dependent upon their own resources, refuse to marry a rich man whom they did not love; and I have known cases where the lover has lost his property, and the young girl, when urged to break the engagement, has replied, 'I have given my faith and my heart to this man, and I will be his wife.' It is from this trust in woman's integrity, and in this better hope, that I feel called to join this Convention. I would not join it, if I believed women to be as unworthy as they have been represented."

Mrs. Nichols added: "I agree perfectly with the last speaker, that women are not often mercenary. But what the friend who preceded her said is—and Mrs. Spring would probably admit the fact—that the tendency of things now is, since woman finds herself in a state of helplessness which makes money necessary to her comfort, to induce her to regard that as an object in her matrimonial connections. The fact is, she marries before she is capable of calculation; her feelings and her heart are interested before she has a thought of the necessities of her condition—when she is a minor. She usually forms this relation before she becomes selfish and calculating, and she turns to her brother man for love, as the only form in which her being can be developed. She cannot look to the professions. However much she may desire to labor for the welfare of her fellows in the ministerial field, the pulpit is closed against her. In my youth, I had a longing desire to do good, but the teacher's desk was the only sphere that opened before me. I thought that I could not always remain in the position of a teacher, but in my whole soul I felt that there *was* a position in which I might give expansion to my being. I became a wife and a mother, and felt that I had entered upon the most sacred relations of life. But what were my relations to my family at home? I could not hope to follow my sons to the haunts to which they would go, to throw around them my protection. I could not hope to send my daughters with my sons as guardian angels; for what God had joined, the customs of society had put asunder. These were sad and tearful thoughts to me, for, prompted 32 by affection, I had married, and in my affections sought the full measure of my moral and intellectual capacity to be, to do, and to endure.

"My friends, it is after women are married that their responsibilities teach them the necessity for calculation. When women marry, their husbands often say, 'We do not want you to work; we do not even want you to wet your fingers.' And they are sincere in this. They are themselves ignorant. They do not know that kindness cannot relieve the wife and mother of her responsibility. They do not know that love is the only principle that can bring a man or woman up to the highest vigor of their energies, and that only her loving hand can minister at the domestic altar. I beg you to accept this explanation of the position taken by my friend."

Notice was then given, that as during the whole day the hall had been crowded with earnest listeners, while hundreds had been unable to gain entrance, arrangements had been made to hold

the remaining sessions in the City Hall; and thither the Convention now adjourned, to meet at 7 o'clock.

## **EVENING SESSION.**

The spacious City Hall was crowded long before the hour of meeting, many being unable to gain entrance.

W. H. Channing first took the stand, and introduced the topic of the evening, "The Civil and Political Position of Woman," by reading the following letter, which he accompanied by some remarks on the rightfulness and expediency of Woman's co-sovereignty with Man:—

### ***To the Convention of the Women of America.***

Dear Sisters:— Your courageous declaration of Woman's Rights has resounded even to our prison, and has filled our souls with inexpressible joy.

In France, the Re-action has suppressed the cry of Liberty of the Women of the future, deprived, like their brothers of the Democracy, of the right to civil and political equality; and the fiscal laws, which trammel the liberty of the press, hinder the propagation of those eternal truths which must regenerate humanity.

They wish also—the Women of France—to found a hospitable tribunal, which shall receive the cry of the oppressed and suffering, and vindicate, in the name of human solidarity, the social right for both sexes equally; and where Woman, the Mother of Humanity, may claim in the name of her children, mutilated by tyranny, her right to true liberty, to the complete development and free exercise of all her faculties, and reveal that half of truth *which is in her*, and without which no social work can be complete.

The darkness of the Re-action has obscured the Sun of 1848, which seemed to rise so radiantly. Why? Because the revolutionary tempest, in overturning at the same time the Throne and the Scaffold, in breaking the chain of the black slave, forgot to break the chain of the most oppressed of all—of Woman, the Pariah of humanity.

1. "There shall be no more slaves," said our brethren. "We proclaim universal suffrage. All shall have the right to elect the agents who will carry out that Constitution which should be based on the

principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Let each one come and deposit his vote; the barrier of privilege is overturned before the electoral urn; there are no more oppressed, no more masters and slaves."

Woman, in listening to this appeal, rises and approaches the liberating urn to exercise her right of suffrage as a member of society.<sup>\*</sup> But the barrier of privilege rises also before her. "You must wait," they say! But by this claim alone, Woman affirms the right, not yet recognized, of the *half of humanity*—the right of Women to Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. She obliges man to verify the fatal attack which he makes on the integrity of his principles.

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\* The 27th of Feb, 1848, Pauline Roland presented herself before the electoral re-union, to claim the right of nominating the Mayor of the city where she lived. Having been refused, she claimed in April, the same year, the right to take part in the elections for the Constituent Assembly, and was again refused.

And soon, in fact, during the wonderful days of June, 1848, Liberty glides from her pedestal in the flood of the victims of the Re-action;—based on the right of *the strongest*, she falls, overturned in the name of "the right of the strongest. "

The Assembly kept silence in regard to the right of one half of humanity—for which only one of its members<sup>†</sup> raised his voice, but in vain; no mention was made of the right of Woman, in a Constitution framed in the name of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

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† Victor Considérant.

2. It is in the name of these principles, that Woman comes to claim her right to make part in the Legislative Assembly, and to help form the laws which must govern society, of which she is a member.

She comes to demand of the electors the consecration of the principle 34 of equality by the election of a Woman; and by this act<sup>\*</sup> she obliges man to prove that the fundamental law which he has formed in the sole name of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, is still based upon *privilege*. And soon privilege triumphs over this phantom of universal suffrage, which, being but the half of itself, sinks on the 31st of May, 1850.

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\* In April, 1840, Jeanne Deroine claimed for Woman the right of eligibility, by presenting herself as a candidate for the Legislative Assembly, and she sustained this right before the preparatory electoral re-unions of Paris.

3. But while those elected by the half of the people, by men alone, evoke force to stifle liberty, and forge restrictive laws to establish order by compression, Woman, guided by fraternity—foreseeing incessant struggles, and in hope of putting an end to them—makes an appeal to the Laborer to found Liberty and Equality on fraternal solidarity. The participation of Woman gave to this work of enfranchisement an eminently pacific character, and the laborer recognizes the right of Woman, his companion in labor.

The delegates of a hundred and four associations, united without distinction of sex, elected two Women<sup>†</sup> with several of their brethren, to participate equally with them in the administration of the interests of labor, and in the organization of the work of solidarity.

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**† The 3d of Oct., 1849, Pauline Roland and Jeanne Deroine, delegates from the Fraternal Associations, were elected members of the Central Committee of the Associative Unions.**

Fraternal associations were formed with the object of enfranchising the laborer from the yoke of spoliage and patronage; but, isolated in the midst of the Old World, their efforts could only produce a feeble amelioration for themselves.

The union of associations based on fraternal solidarity had for its end the Organization of Labor, that is to say, an equable division of labor, of instruments, and of the products of labor.

The means were, the union of labor and of credit among the workers of all professions, in order to acquire the instruments of labor, and the necessary materials, and to form a mutual guarantee for the education of their children, and to provide for the needs of the old, the sick, and the infirm.

In this organization<sup>‡</sup> all the workers, without distinction of sex or profession, having an equal right to election, and being eligible for all functions, and all having equally the initiative and the sovereign decision in the acts of common interests—they laid the foundations of a new society based on Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

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**‡ This Central Committee was for the Fraternal Associations what the Constituent Assembly was for the French Republic in 1848.**

4. It is in the name of law framed by Man only—by those elected by privilege—that the Old World, wishing to stifle in the germ the holy work of pacific enfranchisement, has shut up within the *walls of a prison* those who had founded it, those elected by the laborers.

But the impulse has been given—a grand act has been accomplished. The right of Woman has been recognized by the laborers, and they have consecrated that right by the election of those who

had claimed it in vain for both sexes, before the electoral urn and before the electoral committees. They have received the true civil baptism; elected by the laborers to accomplish the mission of enfranchisement, after having shared their rights and their duties, they share to-day their captivity.

It is from the depths of their prison that they address to you the relation of these facts, which contain in themselves high instruction. It is by labor, it is by entering resolutely into the ranks of the working people, that Women will conquer the civil and political equality on which depends the happiness of the world. As to moral equality, has she not conquered it by the power of sentiment? It is, therefore, by the sentiment of the love of humanity that the Mother of humanity will find power to accomplish her high mission. It is when she shall have well comprehended the holy law of solidarity,—which is not an obscure and mysterious dogma, but a living providential fact,—that the kingdom of God promised by Jesus, and which is no other than the kingdom of Equality and Justice, shall be realized on earth.

Sisters of America! your socialist sisters of France are united with you in the vindication of the right of Woman to civil and political equality. We have, moreover, the profound conviction that only by the power of association, based on solidarity,—by the union of the working classes of both sexes to organize labor,—can be acquired completely and pacifically the Civil and Political Equality of Woman, and the Social Right for All.

It is in this confidence, that from the depths of the jail which still imprisons our bodies without reaching our hearts, we cry to you—Faith, Love, Hope; and send to you our sisterly salutations.

(Signed) Jeanne Deroine, Pauline Roland. *Paris, Prison of St. Lagare, June 15, 1851.*

## 36

Mrs. Ernestine L. Rose, of New York, then spoke as follows:—

After having heard the letter read from our poor incarcerated sisters of France, well might we exclaim, Alas! poor France! where is thy glory? Where the glory of the Revolution of 1848, in which shone forth the pure and magnanimous spirit of an oppressed nation, struggling for Freedom? Where the fruits of that victory that gave to the world the motto, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity? A motto destined to hurl the tyranny of kings and priests into the dust, and give freedom to the enslaved millions of the earth. Where, I again ask, is the result of these noble achievements, when Woman, ay, one half of the nation, is deprived of her rights? Has Woman then been idle during the contest between Right and Might? Has she been wanting in ardor and enthusiasm? Has she not mingled her blood with that of her husband, son, and sire? Or has she been recreant in hailing the motto of Liberty floating on your banners as an omen of justice, peace, and freedom to man, that

at the first step she takes practically to claim the recognition of her Rights, she is rewarded with the doom of a martyr? But Right has not yet asserted her prerogative, for Might rules the day; and as every good cause must have its martyrs, why should Woman not be a martyr for her cause? But need we wonder that France, governed as she is by Russian and Austrian despotism, does not recognize the rights of humanity in the recognition of the Rights of Woman, when even here, in this far-famed land of freedom, under a Republic that has inscribed on its banner the great truth that all men are created free and equal, and endowed with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,—a declaration borne, like the vision of hope, on wings of light to the remotest parts of the earth, an omen of freedom to the oppressed and downtrodden children of man,—when, even here, in the very face of this eternal truth, woman, the mockingly so called “better half” of man, has yet to plead for her rights, nay, for her life; for what is life without liberty, and what is liberty without equality of rights? And as for the pursuit of happiness, she is not allowed to pursue any line of life that might promote it; she has only thankfully to accept what man in his magnanimity decides as best for her to do, and this is what he does not choose to do himself. Is she then not included in that declaration? Answer, ye wise men of the nation, and answer truly; add not hypocrisy to oppression! Say that she is not created free and equal, and therefore (for the sequence follows on the premises) that she is not entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But with all the audacity arising from an assumed superiority, you dare not so libel and insult humanity as to say, that she is not included in that declaration; and if she is, then what right has man, except that of might, to deprive woman of the rights and privileges he claims for himself? And why, in the name of reason and justice, why should she not have the same rights? Because she is woman? Humanity recognizes no sex—virtue recognizes no sex—mind recognizes no sex—life and death, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery recognize no sex. Like man, woman comes involuntarily into existence; like him she possesses physical and mental and moral powers, on the proper cultivation of which depends her happiness; like him she is subject to all the vicissitudes of life; like him she has to pay the penalty for disobeying nature's laws, and far greater penalties has she to suffer from ignorance of her far more complicated nature than he; like him she enjoys or suffers with her country. Yet she is not recognized as his equal! In the laws of the land she has no rights, in government she has no voice. And in spite of another principle, recognized in this Republic, namely, that “taxation without representation is tyranny,” yet she is taxed without being represented. Her property may be consumed by taxes to defray the expenses of that unholy, unrighteous custom called war, yet she has no power to give her veto against it. From the cradle to the grave she is subject to the power and control of man. Father, guardian, or husband, one conveys her like some piece of merchandise over to the other. At marriage she loses her entire identity, and her being is said to have become merged in her husband. Has nature thus merged it? Has she ceased to exist and feel pleasure and pain? When she violates the laws of her being, does her husband pay the penalty? When she breaks the moral laws, does he suffer the punishment? When he supplies his wants, is it enough to satisfy



her nature? And when at his nightly orgies, in the grog-shop and the oyster cellar, or at the gaming-table, he squanders the means she helped by her coöperation and economy to accumulate, and she awakens to penury and destitution, will it supply the wants of her children to tell them, that owing to the superiority of man she had no redress by law; and that as her being was merged in his, so also ought theirs to be? What an inconsistency, that from the moment she enters that compact, in which she assumes the high responsibility of wife and mother, she ceases legally to exist, and becomes a purely submissive being. Blind submission in woman is considered a virtue, while submission to wrong is itself wrong, and resistance to wrong is virtue alike in woman as in man.

But it will be said that the husband provides for the wife, or in other words, he feeds, clothes, and shelters her! I wish I had the power to make every one before me fully realize the degradation contained in that 38 idea. Yes! he *keeps* her, and so he does a favorite horse; by law they are both considered his property. Both may, when the cruelty of the owner compels them to run away, be brought back by the strong arm of the law, and according to a still extant law of England both may be led by the halter to the market-place and sold. This is humiliating indeed, but nevertheless true; and the sooner these things are known and understood, the better for humanity. It is no fancy sketch. I know that some endeavor to throw the mantle of romance over the subject, and treat woman like some ideal existence, not liable to the ills of life. Let such deal in fancy, that have nothing better to deal in; we have to do with sober, sad realities, with stubborn facts.

Again, I shall be told that the law presumes the husband to be kind, affectionate, and ready to provide for and protect his wife. But what right, I ask, has the law to presume at all on the subject? What right has the law to intrust the interest and happiness of one being into the hands of another? And if the merging of the interest of one being into the other is a necessary consequence on marriage, why should woman always remain on the losing side? Turn the tables. Let the identity and interest of the husband be merged in the wife. Think you she would act less generously towards him, than he towards her? Think you she is not capable of as much justice, disinterested devotion, and abiding affection, as he is? Oh, how grossly you misunderstand and wrong her nature! But we desire no such undue power over man; it would be as wrong in her to exercise it as it now is in him. All we claim is an equal legal and social position. We have nothing to do with individual man, be he good or bad, but with the laws that oppress woman. We know that bad and unjust laws must in the nature of things make man so too. If he is kind, affectionate, and consistent, it is because the kindlier feelings, instilled by a mother, kept warm by a sister, and cherished by a wife, will not allow him to carry out those barbarous laws against woman.

But the estimation she is generally held in, is as degrading as it is foolish. Man forgets that woman cannot be degraded without its re-acting on himself. The impress of her mind is stamped on



him by nature, and the early education of the mother which no after-training can entirely efface; and therefore, the estimation she is held in falls back with double force upon him. Yet, from the force of prejudice against her, he knows it not. Not long ago, I saw an account of two offenders, brought before a Justice of New York. One was charged with stealing a pair of boots, for which offense he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment; the other crime was assault and battery upon 39 his wife: he was let off with a reprimand from the judge! With my principles, I am entirely opposed to punishment, and hold, that to reform the erring and remove the causes of evil is much more efficient, as well as just, than to punish. But the judge showed us the comparative value which he set on these two kinds of *property*. But then you must remember that the boots were taken by a stranger, while the wife was insulted by her legal owner! Here it will be said, that such degrading cases are but few. For the sake of humanity, I hope they are. But as long as woman shall be oppressed by unequal laws, so long will she be degraded by man. We have hardly an adequate idea how all-powerful law is in forming public opinion, in giving tone and character to the mass of society. To illustrate my point, look at that infamous, detestable law, which was written in human blood, and signed and sealed with life and liberty, that eternal stain on the statute book of this country, the Fugitive Slave Law. Think you that before its passage, you could have found any in the free States—except a few politicians in the market—base enough to desire such a law? No! no! Even those who took no interest in the slave question, would have shrunk from so barbarous a thing. But no sooner was it passed, than the ignorant mass, the rabble of the self-styled Union Safety Committee, found out that we were a law-loving, law-abiding people! Such is the magic power of Law. Hence the necessity to guard against bad ones. Hence also the reason why we call on the nation to remove the legal shackles from woman, and it will have a beneficial effect on that still greater tyrant she has to contend with, Public Opinion.

Carry out the republican principle of universal suffrage, or strike it from your banners and substitute "Freedom and Power to one half of society, and submission and slavery to the other." Give woman the elective franchise. Let married women have the same right to property that their husbands have; for whatever the difference in their respective occupations, the duties of the wife are as indispensable and far more arduous than the husband's. Why then should the wife, at the death of her husband, not be his heir to the same extent that he is heir to her? In this inequality there is involved another wrong. When the wife dies, the husband is left in the undisturbed possession of all there is, and the children are left with him; no change is made, no stranger intrudes on his home and his affliction. But when the husband dies, not only is the widow, as too often is the case, deprived of all, and at best receives but a mere pittance, while strangers assume authority denied to the wife. The sanctuary of affliction must be desecrated by executors; everything must be ransacked and assessed, lest she should 40 steal something out of her own house; and to cap the climax, the children must be placed under guardians. When the husband dies poor, to be sure, no guardian

is required, and the children are left for the mother to care and toil for them, as best she may. But when anything is left for their maintenance, then it must be placed in the hands of strangers for safe keeping! The bringing up and safety of the children is left with the mother, and safe they are in her hands. But a few hundred or thousand dollars cannot be intrusted with her! But, say they, "in case of a second marriage, the children must be protected in their possession." Does that reason not hold as good in the case of the husband as in that of the wife? Oh, no! When *he* marries again, he still retains his identity and power to act; but *she* becomes merged once more into a mere nonentity; and therefore the first husband must rob her to prevent the second from doing so! Make the laws then, (if any are required,) regulating property between husband and wife, equal for both, and all these difficulties would be removed.

According to a late act, the wife has a right to the property she brings at marriage, or receives in any way after marriage. Here is some provision for the favored few; but for the laboring many, there is none. The mass of the people commence life with no other capital than the union of heads, hearts and hands. To the benefit of this best of capital, the wife has no right. If they are unsuccessful in married life, who suffers more the bitter consequences of poverty than the wife? But if successful, she cannot call a dollar her own. The husband may will away every dollar of the personal property, and leave her destitute and penniless, and she has no redress by law. And even where real estate is left, she receives but a life-interest in a third part of it, and at her death, she cannot leave it to any one belonging to her, it falls back even to the remotest of his relatives. This is law, but where is the justice of it? Well might we say that laws were made to prevent, not to promote, the ends of justice. Or, in case of separation, why should the children be taken from the protecting care of the mother? Who has a better right to them than she? How much do fathers generally do towards the bringing of them up? When he comes home from business, and the child is in good humor and handsome trim, he takes the little darling on his knee and plays with it. But when the wife, with the care of the whole household on her shoulders, with little or no help, is not able to put them in the best order or trim, how much does he do towards it? Oh, no! Fathers like to have children good-natured, well-behaved, and comfortable, but how to put them in that desirable condition is out of their philosophy. Children always depend more on the tender, watchful care of the mother, than of the father. Whether from nature, habit, or both, the mother is much more capable of administering to their health and comfort than the father, and therefore she has the best right to them. And where there is property, it ought to be divided equally between them, with an additional provision from the father towards the maintenance and education of the children. Much is said about the burdens and responsibilities of married men. Responsibilities indeed there are, if they but felt them; but as to burdens, what are they? The sole province of man seems to be centered in that one thing, attending to some business. I grant that owing to the present unjust and unequal reward for labor, many have to work too hard for a subsistence; but whatever his vocation, he has to attend as much to it before as after marriage.

Look at your bachelors, and see if they do not strive as much for wealth, and attend as steadily to business, as married men. No! the husband has little or no increase of burden, and every increase of comfort after marriage; while most of the burdens, cares, pains, and penalties of married life fall on the wife. How unjust and cruel, then, to have all the laws in his favor! If any difference should be made, by law, between husband and wife, reason, justice, and humanity—if their voices were heard—would dictate that it should be in her favor.

It is high time to denounce such gross injustice, to compel man by the might of right to give to woman her political, legal, and social rights. Open to her all the avenues of emolument, distinction, and greatness; give her an object for which to cultivate her powers, and a fair chance to do so, and there will be no need to speculate as to her proper sphere. She will find her own sphere in accordance with her capacities, powers, and tastes; and yet she will be woman still. Her rights will not change, but strengthen, develop, and elevate her nature. Away, then, with that folly and absurdity, that a possession of her rights would be detrimental to her character; that if she is recognized as the equal to man, she would cease to be woman. Have his rights as citizen of a republic, the elective franchise with all its advantages, so changed man's nature, that he has ceased to be man? Oh, no! But woman could not bear such a degree of power; what has benefited him, would injure her; what has strengthened him, would weaken her; what has prompted him to the performance of his duties, would make her neglect hers! Such is the superficial mode of reasoning—if it deserves that name—which is brought against the doctrine of woman's equality with man. It reminds me of two reasons given by a minister of Milton, on the North River. Having heard that I had spoken on the Rights of Woman, 42 he took the subject up on the following Sunday; and in order to prove that woman should not have equal rights with man, he argued, first, that Adam was created before Eve, and secondly, that man was compared to the fore wheels, and woman to the hind wheels of a wagon. These reasons are about as philosophical as any that can be brought against the views we advocate.

But here is another difficulty. In point of principle, some say it is true that woman ought to have the same rights as man; but in carrying out this principle in practice, would you expose her to the contact of rough, rude, drinking, swearing, fighting men at the ballot-box? What a humiliating confession lies in this plea for keeping woman in the background! Is the brutality of some men, then, a reason why woman should be kept from her rights? If man, in his superior wisdom, cannot devise means to enable woman to deposit her vote without having her finer sensibilities shocked by such disgraceful conduct, then there is an additional reason, as well as necessity, why she should be there to civilize, refine, and purify him, even at the ballot-box. Yes, in addition to the principle of right, this is one of the reasons, drawn from expediency, why woman should participate in all the important duties of life; for, with all due respect to the other sex, she is the true civilizer of man.

With all my heart do I pity the man who has grown up and lives without the benign influence of woman. Even now, in spite of being considered the inferior, she exerts a most beneficial influence on man. Look at your annual festivities where woman is excluded, and you will find more or less drunkenness, disorder, vulgarity, and excess, to be the order of the day. Compare them with festive scenes where woman is the equal participant with man, and there you will see rational, social enjoyment and general decorum prevailing. If this is the case now—and who can deny it?—how much more beneficial would be woman's influence, if, as the equal with man, she should take her stand by his side, to cheer, counsel, and aid him through the drama of life, in the Legislative halls, in the Senate chamber, in the Judge's chair, in the jury box, in the Forum, in the Laboratory of the arts and sciences, and wherever duty would call her for the benefit of herself, her country, her race. For at every step she would carry with her a humanizing influence.

Oh! blind and misguided man! you know not what you do in opposing this great reform. It is not a partial affair confined to class, sect, or party. Nations have ever struggled against nations, people against despotic governments; from the times of absolute despotism to the present hour of comparative freedom, the weak have had to struggle against the strong, and right against might. But a new sign has appeared in our social zodiac, prophetic of the most important changes, pregnant with the most beneficial results, that have ever taken place in the annals of human history. We have before us a novel spectacle, an hitherto unheard-of undertaking, in comparison to which all others fall into insignificance, the grandest step in the onward progress of humanity. *One half of the race* stands up against the injustice and oppression of the other, and demands the recognition of its existence, and of its rights. Most sincerely do I pity those who have not advanced far enough to aid in this noble undertaking; for the attainment of woman's coequality with man is in itself not the *end*, but the most efficient *means* ever at the command of mankind towards a higher state of human elevation, without which the race can never attain it. Why should one half of the race keep the other half in subjugation? In this country it is considered wrong for one nation to enact laws and force them upon another. Does the same wrong not hold good of the sexes? Is woman a being like man? Then she is entitled to the same rights, is she not? How can he legislate rightfully for a being whose nature he cannot understand, whose motives he cannot appreciate, and whose feelings he cannot realize? How can he sit in judgment and pronounce a verdict against a being so entirely different from himself?

No! there is no reason against woman's elevation, but there are deep-rooted, hoary-headed prejudices. The main cause of them is, a pernicious falsehood propagated against her being, namely, that she is inferior by her nature. Inferior in what? What has man ever done, that woman, under the same advantages, could not do? In morals, bad as she is, she is generally considered his superior. In the intellectual sphere, give her a fair chance before you pronounce a verdict against her. Cultivate

the frontal portion of her brain as much as that of man is cultivated, and she will stand his equal at least. Even now, where her mind has been called out at all, her intellect is as bright, as capacious, and as powerful as his. Will you tell us, that women have no Newtons, Shakspeares, and Byrons? Greater natural powers than even these possessed may have been destroyed in woman for want of proper culture, a just appreciation, reward for merit as an incentive to exertion, and freedom of action, without which, mind becomes cramped and stifled, for it cannot expand under bolts and bars; and yet, amid all blighting, crushing circumstances—confined within the narrowest possible limits, trampled upon by prejudice and injustice, from her education and position forced to occupy herself almost exclusively with the most trivial affairs—in spite of all these difficulties, her intellect is as good as 44 his. The few bright meteors in man's intellectual horizon could well be matched by woman, were she allowed to occupy the same elevated position. There is no need of naming the De Staëls, the Rolands, the Somervilles, the Wolstonecrafts, the Sigourneys, the Wrights, the Martineaus, the Hemanses, the Fullers, Jagellos, and many more of modern as well as ancient times, to prove her mental powers, her patriotism, her self-sacrificing devotion to the cause of humanity, and the eloquence that gushes from her pen, or from her tongue. These things are too well known to require repetition. And do you ask for fortitude, energy, and perseverance? Then look at woman under suffering, reverse of fortune, and affliction, when the strength and power of man have sunk to the lowest ebb, when his mind is overwhelmed by the dark waters of despair. She, like the tender ivy plant, bent yet unbroken by the storms of life, not only upholds her own hopeful courage, but clings around the tempest-fallen oak, to speak hope to his faltering spirit, and shelter him from the returning blast of the storm.

Wherein then, again I ask, is man so much woman's superior, that he must for ever remain her master? In physical strength? Allow me to say, that therein the inmates of the forest are his superior. But even on this point, why is she the feeble, sickly, suffering being we behold her? Look to her most defective and irrational education, and you will find a solution of the problem. Is the girl allowed to expand her limbs and chest in healthful exercise in the fresh breezes of heaven? Is she allowed to inflate her lungs and make the welkin ring with her cheerful voice like the boy? Who ever heard of a girl committing such improprieties? A robust development in a girl is unfashionable, a healthy, sound voice is vulgar, a ruddy glow on the cheek is coarse; and when vitality is so strong within her as to show itself in spite of bolts and bars, then she has to undergo a bleaching process, eat lemons, drink vinegar, and keep in the shade.

And do you know why these irrationalities are practised? Because man wishes them to be delicate; for whatever he admires in woman will she possess. That is the influence man has over woman, for she has been made to believe that she was created for his benefit only. "It was not well for man to be alone," therefore she was made as a plaything to pass away an idle hour, or as a drudge to do

his bidding; and until this falsehood is eradicated from her mind, until she feels that the necessities, services, and obligations of the sexes are mutual, that she is as independent of him as he is of her, that she is formed for the same aims and ends in life that he is—until, in fact, she has all rights equal with man, there will be no other object in her education, except to get married, and what will best promote that desirable end will be cultivated in her. Do you not yet understand what has made woman what she is? Then see what the sickly taste and perverted judgment of man now admires in woman. Not physical and mental vigor, but a pale, delicate face; hands too small to grasp a broom, for that were treason in a lady; a voice so sentimental and depressed, that what she says can be learned only by the moving of her half parted lips; and above all, that nervous sensibility which sees a ghost in every passing shadow, that beautiful diffidence which dares not take a step without the protecting arm of man to support her tender frame, and that shrinking mock-modesty that faints at the mention of a leg of a table. I know there are many noble exceptions, who see and deplore these irrationalities; but as a general thing, the facts are as I state, or else why that hue and cry of “mannish,” “unfeminine,” “out of her sphere,” etc., whenever woman evinces any strength of body or mind, and takes interest in anything deserving of a rational being? Oh! the crying injustice towards woman. She is crushed at every step, and then insulted for being what a most pernicious education and corrupt public sentiment have made her. But there is no confidence in her powers, nor principles.

After last year's Woman's Convention, I saw an article in the *Christian Inquirer*, a Unitarian paper, edited by the Rev. Mr. Bellows, of New York, where, in reply to a correspondent on the subject of woman's rights, in which he strenuously opposed her taking part in anything in public, he said: “Place woman unbonneted and unshawled before the public gaze, and what becomes of her modesty and her virtue?” In his benighted mind, the modesty and virtue of woman is of so fragile a nature, that when it is in contact with the atmosphere, it evaporates like chloroform. But I refrain to comment on such a sentiment. It carries with it its own deep condemnation. When I read the article, I earnestly wished I had the ladies of the writer's congregation before me, to see whether they could realize the estimation their pastor held them in. Yet I hardly know which sentiment was strongest in me, contempt for such foolish opinions, or pity for a man that has so degrading an opinion of woman—of the being that gave him life, that sustained his helpless infancy with her ever watchful care, and laid the very foundation for the little mind he may possess—of the being he took to his bosom as the partner of his joys and sorrows—the one whom, when he strove to win her affection, he courted, as all such men court woman, like some divinity. Such a man deserves our pity; for I cannot realize that a man purposely and willfully degrades his Mother, Sister, Wife, and Daughter. No! my better nature, my best knowledge and conviction forbid me to believe it.



It is from ignorance, not malice, that man acts towards woman as he does. In ignorance of her nature, and the interest and happiness of both sexes, he conceived ideas, laid down rules, and enacted laws concerning her destiny and rights. The same ignorance, strengthened by age, sanctified by superstition, ingrafted into his being by habit, makes him carry these convictions out to the detriment of his own as well as her happiness; for is he not the loser by his injustice? Oh! how severely he suffers. Who can fathom the depth of misery and suffering to society from the subjugation and injury inflicted on woman? The race is elevated in excellence and power, or kept back in progression, in accordance with the scale of woman's position in society. But so firmly has prejudice closed the eyes of man to the light of truth, that though he feels the evils, he knows not their cause. Those men who have their eyes already open to these facts, earnestly desire the restoration of woman's rights, as the means of enabling her to take her proper position in the scale of humanity. If all men could see the truth, all would desire to aid this reform, as they desire their own happiness; for the interest and happiness of the sexes cannot be divided. Nature has too closely united them to permit one to oppress the other with impunity. I cast no more blame or reproach on man, however, than on woman, for she, from habit based on the same errors, is as much opposed to her interest and happiness as he is. How long is it, indeed, since any of us have come out of the darkness into the light of day? how long since any of us have advocated this righteous cause? The longest period is but, as it were, yesterday. And why has this been? From the same reason that so many of both sexes are opposed to it yet—ignorance. Both men and women have to be roused from that deathly lethargy in which they slumber. That worse than Egyptian darkness must be dispelled from their minds before the pure rays of the sun can penetrate them. And therefore, while I feel it my duty, ay, a painful duty, to point out the wrong done to woman and its consequences, and would do all in my power to aid in her deliverance, I can have no more ill feelings towards man than, for the same error, I have towards her. Both are the victims of error and ignorance, both suffer. Hence the necessity for active, earnest endeavors to enlighten their minds; hence the necessity for this, and many more Conventions, to protest against the wrong and claim our rights. And in so acting, we must not heed the taunts, ridicule, and stigmas cast upon us. We must remember <sup>47</sup> that we have a crusade before us, far holier and more righteous than led warriors to Palestine—a crusade, not to deprive any one of his rights, but to claim our own. And as our cause is a nobler one, so also should be the means to achieve it. We therefore must put on the armor of charity, carry before us the banner of truth, and defend ourselves with the shield of right against the invaders of our liberty. And yet, like the knight of old, we must enlist in this holy cause with a disinterested devotion, energy, and determination never to turn back until we have conquered, not, indeed, by driving the Turk from his possession, but by claiming our rightful inheritance, for his benefit as well as for our own. To achieve this glorious victory of right over might, woman has much to do. Man may remove her legal shackles, and recognize her as his equal, which will greatly aid in her elevation; but the law

cannot compel her to cultivate her mind and take an independent stand as a free being. She must cast off that mountain weight, that intimidating cowardly question, which like a nightmare presses down all her energies, namely, "What will people say? what will Mrs. Grundy say?" Away with such slavish fears! Woman must think for herself, and use for herself that greatest of all prerogatives—judgment of right and wrong. And next she must act according to her best convictions, irrespective of any other voice than that of right and duty. The time, I trust, will come, though slowly, yet surely, when woman will occupy that high and lofty position, for which nature has so eminently fitted her, in the destinies of humanity.

Wendell Phillips, Esq., of Boston, was then introduced to the audience, and was received with great cheering. He spoke as follows:

I rejoice, my friends, to see so large an audience gathered to consider this momentous subject. It was well described by Mrs. Rose as the most magnificent reform that has yet been launched upon the world. It is the first organized protest against the injustice which has brooded over the character and the destiny of one half of the human race. Nowhere else, under any other circumstances, has the demand ever yet been made for the liberties of one whole half of our race. It is fitting that we should pause and consider so remarkable and significant a circumstance; that we should discuss the question involved with the seriousness and deliberation suitable to such an enterprise. It strikes indeed a great and vital blow at the whole social fabric of every nation; but this is no argument against it, to my mind. The time has been when it was the duty of the reformer to show cause why he appeared and disturbed the quiet of the world. But when so many reforms have been advocated, and have succeeded, one after another—freedom of the lower classes—freedom of food—freedom of the press—freedom of thought—reform in penal legislation, and a thousand other matters—it seems to me it has been proved conclusively that government commenced in usurpation and oppression; that liberty and civilization, at present, are nothing else than the fragments of rights which the scaffold and the stake have wrung from the strong hands of the usurpers. You may trace every step of progress the world has made, from scaffold to scaffold, and from stake to stake. It would hardly be exaggeration to say, that all the great truths, relating to society and government, have been first heard in the solemn protests of martyred patriotism, or the loud cries of crushed and starving labor. The law has always been wrong. Government began in tyranny and force—began in the feudalism of the soldier and bigotry of the priest; and the ideas of justice and humanity have been fighting their way, like a thunder storm, against the selfishness of human nature. And this is the last great protest against the wrong of ages. It is no argument to my mind, therefore, that the old social fabric of the past is against us.



Neither do I feel called upon to show what woman's proper sphere is. In every great reform, the majority have always said to the claimant, no matter what he claimed, "You are not fit for such a privilege." Luther asked of the Pope liberty for the masses to read the Bible. The reply was, that it would not be safe to trust the common people with the Word of God. "Let them try!" said the great Reformer;— and the history of three centuries of development and purity proclaims the result. They *have* tried; and look around you for the consequences. The lower classes in France claimed their civil rights—the right to vote, and to a direct representation in the government; but the right and lettered classes, the men of cultivated intellects, cried out—"You cannot be made fit." The answer was, "Let us try!" That France is not, as Spain, utterly crushed beneath the weight of a thousand years of misgovernment, is the answer to those who doubt the ultimate success of this experiment.

Woman stands now at the same door. She says, "You tell me I have no intellect—give me a chance. You tell me I shall only embarrass politics—let me try!" The only reply is the same stale argument that said to the Jews of Europe, "You are fit only to make money; you are not fit for the ranks of the army or the halls of Parliament." How cogent the eloquent appeal of Macaulay—"What right have we to take this question for granted? Throw open the doors of that House of Commons, throw open the ranks of the Imperial army, before you deny eloquence to the countrymen of Isaiah, or valor to the descendants of the Maccabees." It is the same now with us. Throw open the doors of Congress, throw open those court-houses, throw wide open the doors of those colleges, and let the sisters of the De Staëls and the Martineaus have offered them the same opportunities for culture as men, and let the result prove their capacity and intellect. When, I say, woman has enjoyed, for as many centuries as we have, the aid of books, the discipline of life, and the stimulus of fame, it will be time to begin the discussion of the questions—"What is the intellect of woman?" "Is it equal to that of man?" Till then, all such discussion is mere beating of the air.

The intellect of Napoleon—what was it? It grew out of the hope to be Caesar or Marlborough, out of Austerlitz and Jena—out of his battle-fields, his throne, and all the great scenes of that eventful life. Open to woman the same scenes, immerse her in the same great interests and pursuits, and if twenty centuries shall not produce a woman Charlemagne or Napoleon, fair reasoning will then allow us to conclude that there is some distinctive peculiarity in the intellects of the sexes. Centuries alone can lay any fair basis for argument. I believe that, on this point, there is a shrinking consciousness that they are not ready for the battle, on the part of *some* of the stronger sex, as they call themselves—a tacit confession of risk to this imagined superiority, in consenting to meet their sisters in the lecture hall or the laboratory of science. My proof of it is this: that the mightiest intellects of the race, from Plato down to the present time—some of the rarest minds of Germany, France and England—have successively yielded their assent to the fact, that woman is equally endowed with man in all intellectual capabilities. 'Tis often only the second-rate who doubt—doubt,

perhaps, because they fear a fair field:— “He either fears his fate too much, Or his deserts are small,  
Who fears to put it to the touch, To gain or lose it all.”

But I wish especially to direct your attention to the precise principle which this movement undertakes to urge upon the community. We do not presume to settle what shall be the profession, education or employment of woman. We have not that presumption. What we ask is simply this— what all other classes have asked before: Leave it to woman to choose for herself her profession, her education, and her sphere. We deny to any portion of the species the right to prescribe to any other portion its sphere, its education, or its rights. We deny the right to any individual to prescribe to any other individual his amount of education, or his rights. That is the sphere of each man, of each woman, of each individual—that is his sphere which he can, with the highest exercise of his powers, fill. The highest act which the human being can do, that is the act which God designed him to do. All that woman asks through this movement is, to be allowed to prove what she can do;— to prove it by liberty of choice, by liberty of action—the only means by which it can ever be settled how much and what she can do. She can reasonably say to us—“I have never fathomed the depths of science; you have taught that it was unwomanly, and withdrawn from me the means of scientific culture. I have never equalled the eloquence of Demosthenes, but you have never quickened my energies by holding up before me the crown and robe of glory and gratitude which I was to win. The tools, now, to him or her who can use them. Welcome me, henceforth, brother, to your arena; and let facts, not theories, settle my capacity, and therefore my sphere. ”

We are not here to-night to assert that woman will enter the lists and conquer, that she will certainly achieve all that man has achieved; but this we say, “Clear the lists, and let her try.” Some reply, “It will be a great injury to feminine delicacy and refinement for woman to mingle in business and politics.” I am not careful to answer this objection. Of all such objections, on this and kindred subjects, Mrs. President, I love to dispose in some such way as this:— The ultimate consequences of any great social change, the broadest and most far-sighted intellect is utterly unable to foresee. Ask yourself, on all such occasions, if there be any element of right and wrong in the question, any principle of clear natural justice that turns the scale. If so, take your part with the perfect and abstract right, and trust God to see that it shall prove the expedient. The questions, then, for me, on this subject, are these:— Has God made woman capable, morally, intellectually and physically, of taking this part in human affairs? Then, what God made her able to do, it is a strong argument that he intended she should do. Does our sense of natural justice dictate that the being who is to suffer under laws shall first personally assent to them; that the being whose industry Government is to burden should have a voice in fixing the character and amount of that burden? Then, while woman is admitted to the gallows, the jail, and the tax list, we have no right to debar her from the ballot-box. “But to go there will hurt that delicacy of character which we have always thought peculiarly her grace.” I cannot help

that. Let Him who created her capable of politics, and made 51 it just that she should have a share in them, see to it that these rights which He has conferred do not injure the being He created. Is it for any human being to trample on the laws of justice and liberty, on an alleged necessity of helping God govern what He has made? I cannot help God govern his world by telling lies, or doing what my conscience deems unjust. How absurd to deem it necessary that any one should do so! When Infinite Wisdom established the rules of right and honesty, He saw to it that justice should be safe.

I do not, therefore, feel at all disturbed by those arguments addressed to us as to the capacity of woman, or as to the effect upon her character of this exercise of her political rights. I know that the humblest man and the feeblest has as much right, according to the theory of our institutions, as the godliest and most gifted intellect that walks our soil. It is never claimed that the humblest shall be denied his civil right, provided he be a man. No; intellect, even though it reach the Alpine height of a Parker—ay, setting aside the infamy of his conduct, and looking at him only as an instance of intellectual greatness, to the height of a Webster—gets no title of additional civil right, no one single claim to any greater civil privilege, than the humblest individual, who knows no more than the first elements of his alphabet, provided that being be a man. (I ought to say, a *white* man.) Grant, then, that woman is intellectually inferior to man—it settles nothing. She is still a responsible, tax-paying member of civil society. We claim, on the great, eternal principle, that taxation and representation must be co-extensive—that rights and burdens must correspond to each other; and he who undertakes to answer the argument of this Convention must first answer the whole course of English and American history for the last hundred and fifty years. No single principle of liberty has been enunciated, from the year 1688 until now, that does not cover the claim of woman. The State has never laid the basis of right upon the distinction of sex; and no reason has ever been given, except a religious one—that there are in the records of our religion, commands that oblige us to make her an exception to our civil theories, and deprive woman of that which those theories give her.

Now, as I stated before, this Convention does not undertake the task of protecting woman. It deals with this great principle, that, in government, every individual should be endowed, as far as possible, with the means of protecting himself. This is far more the truth, when we deal with classes. Every class should be endowed with the power to protect itself. Man has hitherto undertaken to settle what is best for woman in the way of education, and in the matter of property. He 52 has settled it for her, that her duties and cares are too great to allow her any time to take care of her own earnings, or to take her otherwise legitimate share in the civil government of the country. He has not undertaken to say that the sailor or the soldier, in active service, when he returns from his voyage or his camp, is not free to deposit his vote in the ballot-box. He has not undertaken to say that the merchant, whose factories cover whole villages, who is up in the morning early, and lies down late,

who has to borrow the services of scores to help him in the management of his vast estate, he does not say that such a man cannot get time to study politics, and ought therefore to be deprived of his right to vote with his fellow-citizens. He has not undertaken to say that the lawyer, whose whole time is spent in the courts until he knows nothing of what is going on in the streets, may not vote. Oh, no! But as for woman, her time *must* be all filled in taking care of her household—her cares must be so extensive that neither those of soldiers, nor sailors, nor merchants, can be equal to them; she has not a moment to qualify herself for politics. Woman cannot be spared long enough from the kitchen to put in a vote, though Abbott Lawrence can be spared from the counting-house, though General Gaines or Scott can be spared from the camp, though the Curtises and the Choates can be spared from the courts. This is the argument: Stephen Girard cannot go to Congress, he is too busy; therefore, no *man* ever shall. Because General Scott has gone to Mexico, and cannot be President, therefore, no *man* shall be. Because A. B. is a sailor, gone a whaling voyage, to be absent for three years, and cannot vote, therefore, no male inhabitant ever shall. Logic, how profound! reasoning, how conclusive! Yet this is the exact reasoning in the case of woman. Take up the newspapers. See the sneers at this movement. “Take care of the children,”—“Make the clothes,”—“See that they are mended,”—“See that the parlors are properly arranged.” Suppose we grant it. Are there no women but housekeepers? no women but mothers? Oh, yes, many! Suppose we grant that the cares of a household are so heavy that they are greater than the cares of the President of a college—that he who has the charge of some hundreds of youths, is less oppressed with care than the woman with three rooms and two children—that though President Sparks has time for politics, Mrs. Brown has not. Grant that, and still we claim that you should be true to your theory, and grant those rights to single women which the cares of her who is the mistress of a household and mother of a family incapacitate her to exercise.

It is, after all, of little use to argue these social questions. These 53 prejudices never were reasoned up, and, my word for it, they will never be reasoned down. The freedom of the press, the freedom of labor, the freedom of the race, in its lowest classes, was never argued to success. The moment you can get woman to go out into the highway of life, and show by active valor what God has created her for, that moment this question is settled, for ever. One solid fact of a woman making her fortune in trade, will teach the male sex what woman's capacity is. I say, therefore, to women, there are two paths before you in this reform. One is, take all the laws have left you, with a confident and determined hand. The other is, cheer and encourage by your sympathy and aid those noble women who are willing to be the pioneers in this enterprise. See that you stand up the firm supporters of those bold and fearless ones, who undertake to lead their sisters in this movement. If Elizabeth Blackwell, who, trampling under foot the sneers of the other sex, took her maiden reputation in her hand, and entered the hospitals of Europe, comes back the accomplished graduate of them, to offer her services to the women of America, and to prove that woman, equally with man, is qualified to

do the duties and receive the honors and rewards of the healing art, see to it, women, that you greet her efforts with your smiles; that you hasten to her side, and open your households to her practice, and prove that you mean the experiment shall be fairly tried, before you admit that, in your sickness and in your dangers, woman may not stand as safely by your bedside as man. If you will but be true to each other, on some of these points, it is in the power of woman to settle, in a great measure, this question. Why ask aid from the other sex at all? Theories are but thin and unsubstantial air against the solid fact of woman mingling with honor and profit in the various professions and industrial pursuits of life. Would women be true to each other, by smoothing the pathway of each other's endeavors, it is in their power to settle one great aspect of this question, without any statute in such case made and provided. I say, take your rights! There is no law to prevent it, in one half of the instances. If the prejudices of the other sex and the supineness of your own prevent it, there is no help for you in the statute books. It is for you but to speak, and the doors of the Medical Hospitals are open for the women by whom you make it known that you intend to be served. Let us have no separate, and therefore necessarily inferior, schools for women. Let us have no poor schools, feebly endowed, where woman must go to gather what help she may from second-rate professors, in one branch of a profession. No! Mothers, daughters, sisters! say to husband, father, brother, "If this life is dear to you, I intend to trust it, in my 54 hour of danger, to a sister's hand. See to it, ye who are the guides of society, the heads of those institutions, if you love your mother, sister, wife, daughter, see to it that you provide these chosen assistants of mine the means to be disciplined, and competent advisers, in that momentous hour, for I will have no other." When you shall say that, Harvard University, and every other University, and every Medical Institution, will open their doors gladly. You who long for the admission of woman to professional life and the higher ranks of intellectual exertion, up, and throw into her scale this omnipotent weight of your determination to be served by her, and by no other! In this matter, what you decide is law.

There is one other light in which this subject is to be considered—the freedom of ballot—and with a few words upon that, I will close these desultory remarks. As there is no use in educating a human being for nothing, so the thing is an impossibility. Horace Mann says, in the letter that has been read here, that he intends to write a lecture on Woman, and I doubt not that he will take the stand which he has always done, that she should be book-taught for some dozen years, and then retire to the domestic life. Would he give sixpence for a boy, who could only say that he had been shut up for those years in a school? The unfledged youth that comes from college—what is he? He is a man, and has been subjected to seven years' tutoring; but, man though he be, until he has walked up and down the paths of life, until he receives his education in the discipline of the world, in the stimulus of motive, in the hope of gain, in the desire of honor, in the love of reputation, he has got no education at all. Profess to educate woman for her own amusement! Profess to educate her in science, that she may go home and take care of her cradle! Teach her the depths of statesmanship and political

economy, that she may smile sweetly when her husband comes home!“It is not the education man gets from books,” it was well said by your favorite statesman, “but the lessons he learns from life and society, that profit him most highly.” “I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.” You give woman nothing but her books; you deprive her of all the lessons of practical out-door life; you deprive her of all the stimulus which the good and great of all nations, all societies, have enjoyed—the world's honors, its gold, and its fame; and then you coolly ask of her—“Why are you not as well disciplined as we are?” I know there are great souls who need no stimulus but love of truth and growth, whom mere love of labor allures to the profoundest investigations; but these are the exceptions, not the rule. We legislate—we arrange society for the masses, not the exceptions.

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One great reason, then, besides its justice, why we would claim the ballot for woman, is this—because the great school of this people is the jury-box and the ballot-box. De Tocqueville, after travelling in this country, went away with the conviction that, valuable as the jury trial was for the investigation of facts and defense of the citizen, its value in these respects even was no greater than as it was the school of civil education offered to all the people. The education of the American citizen is found in his interest in the debates of Congress, the earnestness with which he seeks to fathom political questions. It is when the mind, heated with stern and profound emotion, stirred to its very depths by the momentous stake at issue, rises to its most gigantic efforts; when the great crisis of some national convulsion is at hand; it is then that a great political excitement lifts the people up in advance of the age—heaves a whole nation on to a higher platform of intellect and morality. Great political questions stir the deepest nature of one half the nation, but they pass far above and over the heads of the other half. Yet, meanwhile, theorists wonder that the first have their whole nature unfolded, and the other will persevere in being dwarfed. Now, this great world-wide, practical, ever-present education, we claim for woman. Never, until it is granted her, can you decide what will be her ability. Deny statesmanship to woman? What, to the sisters of Elizabeth of England, Isabella of Spain, Maria Theresa of Austria; ay, let me add, of Elizabeth Heyrick, who, when the intellect of all England was at fault, and wandering in the desert of a false philosophy—when Brougham and Romilly, Clarkson and Wilberforce, and all the other great and philanthropic intellects of England, were at fault and at a dead-lock with the West India question and negro slavery—with the statesmanlike intellect of a Quaker woman, at Leicester, wrote out the simple yet potent charm which solved the problem, and gave freedom to a race—Immediate, unconditional emancipation;—and all those men, with an alacrity which does honor to their statesmanship, and proves that they recognized the inspired voice when they heard it, sat down at the feet of that woman statesman, and seven years, under her instruction, did more for the settlement of the greatest social question that has ever convulsed England, than had been done in a century of greater or less effort before. Oh no, you cannot read history, unless you read it upside down, without admitting that woman, cramped,



fettered, excluded, degraded as she has been, has yet sometimes, with one ray of her instinctive genius, done more to settle great questions than all the cumbrous intellect of the other sex has achieved.

It is, therefore, on the ground of natural justice, and on the ground 56 again of the highest expediency—and yet again, it is because woman, as an immortal and intellectual being, has a right to all the means of education—it is on these grounds that we claim for her the civil rights and privileges which man enjoys. There was lately a man in one of the western counties of this State, who married an heiress with \$50,000. After he had been married about a year, he died, leaving this remark-ably generous and manly will—he left these \$50,000 to her so long as she should remain his widow. (Loud laughter.) These dollars, which he owed entirely to her, which were hers, he left her back again after twelve months' use, on this one simple condition, that she should never marry again! Now, we say, in regard to such a case as that, and others like it, that woman ought to have a voice in determining what shall be the laws to regulate property in the marriage state. Let her insist that, as by her efforts she is as great a contributor to the stock of a family's wealth as the man, she shall have a voice in the control and disposal of that property.

One word more. We heard to-day a very full, eloquent, and high-spirited address as to the course which it is most expedient for woman to pursue, in regard to the inadequate remuneration extended to her sex. The woman of domestic life receives but about one fourth the amount paid to a man for similar or far lighter services. The woman of out-door labor has about the same. All female employments are subject to a discount of some 20 or 25 per cent. on the wages paid to males. It is futile, if it were just, to blame individuals for this. We have all been burdened long by a common prejudice and a common ignorance. The remedy is not to demand that the manufacturer shall pay his workmen more; that the employer of domestics shall pay them more. It is not capitalists' fault. We inveigh against the wealthy capitalist, but it is not exclusively his fault. It is as much the fault of society itself. It is the fault of that pulpit, which declares it indecorous in woman to labor, except in certain occupations, and thus crowds the whole mass of working women into two or three employments, making them rivet each other's chains. Do you ask me the reason of the low wages paid for female labor? I will tell you. It is this. If there are a thousand women to be employed in any one town, the women, not only of that place, but of a wide circuit round it, go into that occupation. The consequence is, that business must be overstocked with laborers; and the result will be, necessarily, that the labor of the women is worth little or nothing. Women are remunerated so inadequately, because they have but three or four occupations to choose from. But open to her now other occupations; open to her the studio 57 of the artist—let her enter there; open to her the office practice at least of the lawyers—let her go there; open to her all indoor trades of society, to begin with, and let woman monopolize them. Draw off from the domestic service; draw off from the



crowded ranks of the needle-women of New York—ay, leave but the requisite number in the shops of New York—and the consequence is, that like every other independent laborer, like their male brethren, they may make their own terms, and will be fairly paid for their own labor. It is competition in too narrow lists that starves women in our cities; and those lists are drawn narrow by superstition and prejudice.

Woman is ground down, by the competition of her sisters, to the very point of starvation. Heavily taxed, ill paid, in degradation and misery, is it to be wondered at that they yield to the temptation of wealth? It is so with men; and so we recruit the ranks of vice by the prejudices of custom and society. We corrupt the whole social fabric, that woman may be confined to two or three employments. Oh, how much do we suffer through the tyranny of prejudice! When we penitently and gladly give to the energy, and the intellect, and the enterprise of woman their proper reward, their appropriate employment, this question of wages will settle itself; and it will never be settled at all until then.

This question is intimately connected with the great social problem—the vices of cities. You who hang your heads in terror and shame, in view of the advancing demoralization of modern civilized life, and turn away with horror-struck faces, turn back now to these social prejudices which have made you close the avenues of profitable employment in the face of woman, and reconsider the conclusions you have made! Look back, I say, and see whether you are surely right here. Come up with us, and argue the question, and say whether this most artificial delicacy, this odious prejudice, on whose Moloch altar we sacrifice the virtue of so many, is worthy the exalted worship we pay it. There is no other solution of this problem, except what this movement offers you. It is, to leave woman to choose her own employments for herself, responsible, as we are, to the common Creator, and not to her fellow-man. I exhort you, therefore, to look at this question in the spirit in which I have feebly endeavored to present it to you. It is no fanciful, no superficial movement, based on a few individual tastes, in morbid sympathy with tales of suffering. It is a great social protest against the very fabric of society. It is a question which goes down—we admit it, and are willing to meet the issue—goes down beneath the altar at which you worship; goes down beneath this social system in which you live. And 58 it is true—no denying it—that if we are right, the doctrines preached from New England pulpits are wrong; it is true that all this affected horror at woman's deviation from her sphere is a mistake. Understand us. We blink no fair issue. We throw down the gauntlet. We have counted the cost, we know the yoke and burden we assume. We know the sneers, the lying frauds of misstatement and misrepresentation that await us. We have counted all; and it is but the dust in the balance and the small dust in the measure, compared with the inestimable blessing of doing justice to one half of the human species, of curing this otherwise immedicable wound, stopping this otherwise overflowing fountain of corruption, at the very source of civilized life. Truly, it is the great question of the age. It looks all others out of countenance. It needs little aid from legislation.

Specious objections, after all, are not arguments. We know we are right. We only ask an opportunity to argue the question, to set it full before the people, and then leave it to the intellect and the hearts of the men and women of our country, confident that the institutions under which we live, and the education which other reforms have already given to both sexes, have created men and women capable of solving a problem even more difficult, and meeting a change even more radical than this.

Mrs. Emma R. Coe followed in a speech on the legal disabilities of woman. She reviewed, in a strain of pungent irony and sarcasm, the laws of several of the States in relation to woman, showing them to be unjust and oppressive, and prejudicial to the best and highest interests of the whole community. Her speech was listened to with great attention, and warmly applauded. At its conclusion, the Convention adjourned to Thursday morning, at 10 o'clock.

### **Thursday, October 16th. MORNING SESSION.**

The Convention met according to adjournment, at 10 o'clock, in the City Hall.

After the minutes were read, the President called the attention of the assembly to a Report on Woman in her Social Relations, by W. H. Channing.\*

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\* As this Report occupied nearly an hour and a half in its delivery, and would swell this pamphlet to an inconvenient size, it is thought best to defer its publication.

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Harriet K. Hunt then read the following:—

The medical profession is the channel, more legitimately than any other, through which moral and physical truths would fall upon community with a searching power; coming from the life, warm with its experience, it would be the leaven that society needs. No fancy sketches would physicians have to draw, no ideal pictures to present, no imaginary terrors to portray. Moved by Hygienic truth, they would penetrate nooks and corners, and dare to enter upon subjects which fearfully and insidiously are eating out the very vitals of society.

But, it will be said, our physicians have no time for such employment. Even so. To man, as acknowledged yet in this profession, we grant this truth—that hereditary tendencies, occult diseases, ignorance and sin, keep him very busy; otherwise, how could so many live in this calling? We believe they labor conscientiously; we give them cheerfully the curative department; we respect the calling; we love its anxious and cheering hours, and we are disposed to offer a testimony of gratitude to those true and eminent men who have followed and are now faithfully following it: but

we do say, and say it from the experience of many years, it *now* wants life; it wants a response in the people; it needs love to warm it; it needs confidence to appreciate it; it needs intelligence to discriminate between the true and false physician; it needs the moral sentiment, which is ever in freedom, as well as the intellect, to guide it; it needs a female side to this as well as the other arts, for preëminently has woman qualities for this department. Do you ask for proof? We have it, strong and overwhelming, for every candid mind. Look at the disjointed state of the medical world; look at the various *pathies* of the day!

Then the vast and serious increase of quackery, growing mainly out of this one-sidedness in the medical channel; for community are cast adrift, without compass or pilot. The Allopath will not consult with the Homoeopath, and medical etiquette follows even a dying patient.

Again, still farther. Some serious mistakes in our Druggists' stores have alarmed community, and I will read the following from a recent medical journal, as showing a state in the medical world which carries its own inquisitorial stamp:—

“Now, if Druggists expect the patronage and countenance of *our* profession, is it not their obvious duty to refrain from prescribing, abandon the sale of patent medicines, and dispense the healing remedies *only* when a prescription is brought from a regular Physician?”

To have shown a proper interest in the public health, methinks cigars, confectionery, lotions, etc., sold by them, should come under their cognizance. 60 But this is all moonshine. Druggists must be supported, as well as Physicians, and a medical fee for prescribing is a very different thing from 12 1/2 cents prescribed *for*. The public will do as they please, but the public ask for *light* to direct them.

The body utters not itself through pain, anguish, and decay, either in plethoric or cachectic states; but the domain of mind is suffering. Our Insane Asylums are filling. Normality has ceased; temperamental conditions are outraged. Morbid sensibility, acute sensibility—each could tell such fearful tales; and if you, my friends, were to enter the true picture-gallery of life, and watch the varied, saddened, distorted beings there presented, methinks you would say, “How has the fine gold become dimmed!” And then, when we reflect how secretly this work goes on in our sex, how few Physicians there are among us who have enough of the feminine element in them for the true woman to open her inner life to, we can read further pages of anguish, suffered through concealment or outraged feeling. Are not these serious truths?

We would give to man most cheerfully the Curative department, and to woman the Preventive. We would have every one, whose inner life draws her, and whose perceptions are clear as to duty, and who wishes to enter the Medical Profession, possessed of every educational advantage. And this

must be accomplished; can science and justice respond to the demand? When the time comes, then the great truths of Physiology, (ceasing to be exclusive,) the knowledge of the human body, belonging to every man, woman, and child, will be divorced from its present connection with physic, and, attracted to its laws by the necessity of living a healthy life, that the inner life may also be true, the Medical Department will catch a religious glow, from the want of which it now suffers so much, and its lovers will be occupied with sanitary and preventive, rather than curative employments. The Health-instinct of humanity will be enlightened, and days of gladness will be around us, and a discrimination will arise in community by which Physicians shall not be all classed together, but the true ones shall be acknowledged. Many have spent their all with Physicians, when a single truth addressed to them, when lacerated affection and discipline had opened their interior nature, would have been accepted as from the Lord. Opium and valerian, to quiet the nerves, instead of a word fitly chosen, has carried a victim to an Insane Asylum. I speak of what I know.

We will now ask your attention a few moments to the peculiar fitness of woman for this profession, and the positive necessity that she should enter it with every medical and educational advantage. We also ask 61 this Convention to take up this subject, and bear up with their united voices this fact to the people, that it may be heeded. Woman, through sympathy, will attract minds to desire physiological knowledge for its *use*. Her domestic and economic nature will cause it to be looked at in strict connection with duty and life. Her perceptive nature will be apt in diagnosis, and she will delight in distinguishing one disease from another; and thus a prognosis will be attained, through careful thought and scrutinizing patience. She will soon realize that there are cases in every Physician's life in which medicine may appropriately clothe itself in sackcloth, and that temperamental conditions, personal habits, diet, dreams, the communication between soul and body, are the bright and healing balsams which will return and clothe our outer being to minister to the inner. She will love the preventive department, and trace physiological and pathological conditions with an accuracy that will surprise others.

Science, true science, is perspective; it lives in aspirations from the present to the future; it mingles the retrospective with the anticipative element, and the diseases now accumulating say, Watchman, what of the next generation? What of this? says the philanthropist and moralist, in sadness.

Woman suffers from the want of true medical counsel from her own sex. Woman is also needed, in a hygienic light, to visit our public schools; to sit on committees with man; to ask the why and wherefore of the education of our girls; to know the cause of so much misdirected culture, with lamentable indolence on one hand, and over-action on the other; why the needle has been laid aside, and thus careless hours passed. Yes, my friends, she needs to go as a physician, and investigate habits that are poisoning the fountain of life, inducing a precocity of the animal nature

and an irritability of the nervous. She would ask the meaning of such distorted bodies; she would ask why so many early victims to disease and death among our public school children, and why man has taken this great work upon himself *alone*; why our daughters and female teachers are not represented on our committees.

But the most delicate part of my duty remains. We need women, radically educated, armed with religious, moral, and spiritual truths—a triune panoply—that can enter the haunts of vice, places of assignation, desecration, and prostitution, and fear nothing. Her sisters are there, and she must go to them, and investigate such cases. Recognized as a medical counsellor, she can, in the gentle voice of love, probe to heal. She can take the maternal element—so potent, so touching—and blend it with her medicines; and, while the door is open through physical suffering, good spirits will come to her aid, and she will find many lost sheep to rejoice over. From the dusty, dirty cellar, to the stately edifice, with apparent grandeur, do the licentious find their way; and wherever they go, should woman go, virtuous, high-toned woman, supported by medical knowledge, where she can, in suffering moments, arrest some spirit, when moral suasion has been unavailing.

We need a moral police, a moral vigilance committee, a moral reform society, based upon medical knowledge; and a true recognition of both sexes in this great work will give a completeness, an entireness to many movements, which have as yet been failures, and will continue to be, until the whole of Humanity is represented, where the whole of it is suffering.

The female physician must be preventive. She must look upon life through sanitary channels, for she knows full well, if ambition and vanity feed the human being, that dyspepsia and nervousness follow; that mental physiology must be well investigated. She can talk boldly to woman. She can utter truths to her of the most startling and interior character. She can impress her with the high and holy mission she is permitted to perform in clothing a spirit. She can elevate the maternal element to her, and urge upon her, at that sacred time, obedience to laws, and thus her regeneration will be two-fold.

My subject is my life. I have an enthusiasm here which is born of truth, and thankfully utters itself; for I have prairie lands within me, in which I can travel and gather flowers, and thus preserve a freshness which wards off the chill of age; and, as year after year glides away, signal cases, providential blessings, interior perceptions in emergencies, religious thankfulness for strength in times of doubt, will be epochs, rather than years, days, and months, in my life.

Mrs. C. I. H. Nichols, of Brattleboro', Vt., then came forward and spoke as follows:—

My friends, I have made no preparation to address you. I left home feeling that if I had anything to do here, I should have the grace given me to do it; or if there should be any branch of the subject not sufficiently presented, I would present it. And now, friends, in following so many speakers, who have so well occupied the ground, I will come as a gleaner, and be as a Ruth among my fellow-laborers.

I commenced life with the most refined notions of woman's sphere. My pride of womanhood lay within this nice sphere. I know not how it was—perhaps because I am of mountain growth—but I could, even then, see over the barriers of that sphere, and see that however easy it might be for me to keep within it, as a daughter, a great majority of women were outside its boundaries; driven thither by their own, or invited by the necessities and interests of those they loved. I saw our farmers' wives—women esteemed for every womanly virtue—impelled by unforeseen emergencies, helping their husbands in labors excluded from the modern woman's sphere. I was witness, on one occasion, to a wife's helping her husband—who was ill and of feeble strength, and too poor to hire—to pile the logs preparatory to clearing the ground that was to grow their daily bread; and my sympathies, which recognized in her act the self-sacrificing love of woman, forbade that I should judge her out of her sphere. For I felt in my heart that if I were a wife and loved my husband, I too would help him when he needed help, even if it were to *roll a log*; and what true-hearted woman would not do the same?

But, friends, it is only since I have met the varied responsibilities of life, that I have comprehended woman's sphere; and I have come to regard it as lying within the whole circumference of humanity. If, as is claimed by the most ultra opponents of the wife's legal individuality—claimed as a conclusive argument in favor of her legal nonentity—the *interests of the parties are identical*, then I claim, as a legitimate conclusion, that their spheres are also identical. For interests determine duties, and duties are the landmarks of spheres. Wherever a man may *rightfully* go, it is proper that woman should go and share his responsibilities. Wherever my husband goes, thither would I follow him, if to the battlefield. No, I would not follow him *there*, I would hold him back by his coat-skirts, and say, "Husband, this is wrong. What will you gain by war? It will cost as much money to fight for a bag of gold, or a lot of land, as it will to pay the difference; and if you fight, our harvests are wasted, our hearths made desolate, our homes filled with sorrow, and vice and immorality roll back upon us from the fields of human slaughter." This is the way I would follow my husband where he cannot rightfully go.

But I may not dwell longer on woman's *sphere* I shall say very little of woman's *rights*; but I would lay the axe at the root of the tree—I would impress upon you woman's *responsibilities*, and the means fitly to discharge them before Heaven. I have felt, my friends, too timid to speak in public heretofore. But I feel that I am right in bringing this subject before you, and therefore I have great courage to address you now.

I stand before you, a wife, a mother, a sister, a daughter—filling every relation that it is given to woman to fill. And by the token that I have a husband, a father and brothers, whom I revere for their manliness, 64 and love for their tenderness, I may speak to you with confidence and say—I respect manhood. I love it when it aspires to the high destiny which God has opened to it. And it is because I have confidence in manhood, that I am here to press upon it the claims of womanhood. What we want for woman is the means of education, that she may understand and be able to meet her responsibilities.

We are told very much of “Woman's *Mission*.” Well, every mission supposes a missionary. Every missionary whom God sends out; every being who is called of God to labor in the vineyard of humanity, recognizes his call before the world does. Not the world—not even God's chosen people—recognized the mission of his Son, till he had proclaimed that mission, and sealed it with his dying testimony. And the world has not yet fully recognized the saving power of the mission of Jesus Christ. Now if woman has a mission, she must first feel the struggle of the missionary in her own soul, and reveal it to her brother man, before the world will comprehend her claims, and accept her mission. Let her, then, say to man, “Here, God has committed to me the little tender infant to be developed in *body* and *mind* to the maturity of manhood, womanhood, and I am ignorant of the means for accomplishing either. Give me knowledge, instruction, that I may develop its powers, prevent disease, and teach it the laws of its mental and physical organism.” It is you, fathers, husbands, who are responsible for their instruction; your happiness is equally involved with ours. Yourselves must reap the harvest of our ignorance or knowledge. If we suffer, you suffer also; both must suffer or rejoice in our mutual offspring.

I have introduced this subject of woman's responsibilities, that I might, if possible, impress upon you a conviction of the expediency of yielding our right to the means that will enable us to be the helpers of men, in the true sense of helpers. A gentleman said to me not long since, “I like your woman's rights, since I find it is the right of women to be good for something and help their husbands.” Now I do not understand the term helpmeet, as applied to woman, to imply all that has come to be regarded as within its signification. I do not understand that we are at liberty to help men to the devil. (Loud cheering.) I believe it is our mission to help him heavenward, to the full development and right enjoyment of his being.

I would say in reference to the rights of woman, it is apt to be forgotten that, as the mother of the race, her rights are the rights of men also—the rights of her *sons*. As a mother, I may speak to you, freemen, *fathers*, of the rights of my sons—of every mother's sons—to the 65 most perfect and vigorous development of their energies which the mother can secure to them by the application and through the use of *all* her God-given powers of body or of mind. It is in behalf of our sons, the



future men of the Republic, as well as for our daughters, its future mothers, that we claim the full development of our energies by education, and legal protection in the control of all the issues and profits of ourselves, called *property*.

As a parent, I have educated myself with reference to the wants of my children, that if, by the bereavements of life, I am left their sole parent, I can train them to be good and useful citizens. Such bereavement *has* left me the sole parent of sons by a first marriage. And how do the laws of the State protect the right of these sons to their mother's fostering care? The laws say that, having married again, I am a *legal nonentity* and cannot "*give bonds*" for the faithful discharge of my maternal duties; therefore I shall not be their guardian. Having, in the first instance, robbed me of the property qualification for giving bonds by alienating my right to the control of my own earnings, the State makes its own injustice the ground for defrauding myself and children of the mutual benefits of our God-ordained relations; and others, destitute of every qualification and motive which my mother's love insures to them, may "give bonds" and become the legal guardians of my children!

I address myself to you, *fathers*, I appeal to every man who has lived a half century, if the *mother* is not the most faithful guardian of her children's interests? If you were going on a long journey, to be absent for years, in the prosecution of business, or in the army or navy, would you exclude your wives from the care and guardianship of your children? Would you place them and the means for their support in any other hands than the mother's? If you would, *you have married beneath yourselves*. (Cheers.) Then I ask you, how it happens that when you die, your estates are cut up, and your children and the means for their support consigned to others' guardianship by laws which yourselves have made or sworn to defend? Do you reply that women are not qualified by education for the business transactions involved in such guardianship? It is for this I ask that they may be educated. Yourselves must educate your wives in the conduct of your business. My friends, *love* is the best teacher in the world. Fathers, husbands, you do not know how fast you can teach, nor what apt scholars you will find in your wives and daughters, if, with loving confidences, you call them to your aid and teach them those things in which they can aid you, and acquire the knowledge which is "power," to benefit those they love. 66 Would it not soothe your sick-bed, would it not pluck thorns from your dying pillow, to confide in your wife that she could conduct the business on which your family relies for support, and in case of your death, keep your children together and educate them to go out into the world with habits of self-reliance and self-dependence? And do you know that, in withholding from your companions the knowledge and inducements which would fit them thus to share your cares and relieve you in the emergencies of business, you deny them the richest rewards of affection? for "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Do you know that they would only cling the closer to you in the stern conflicts of life, if they were thus taught that you do not undervalue

their devotion and despise their ability? Call woman to your side in the loving confidence of equal interests and equal responsibilities, and she will never fail you.

But I would return to woman's responsibilities and the laws that alienate her means to discharge them. And here let me call your attention to my position, that *the law which alienates the wife's right to the control of her own property, her own earnings, lies at the foundation of all her social and legal wrongs*. I have already shown you how the alienation of this right defrauds her of the legal guardianship of her children in case of the father's death. I need not tell you, who see it every day in the wretched family of the drunkard, that it defrauds her of the means of discharging her responsibilities to her children and to society during the husband's life, when he proves recreant to his obligations, and consumes her earnings in the indulgence of idle and sinful habits. I know it is claimed by many, as a reason why this law should not be disturbed, that it is only the wives of reckless and improvident husbands who suffer under its operation. But, friends, I stand here prepared to show that, as an unjust law of general application, it is even more fruitful of suffering to the wives of what are called *good* husbands; husbands who love and honor their wives while living, but, dying, leave them and their maternal sympathies to the dissecting knife of the law. I refer you to the legal provision for the widow. The law gives her the *use* only of one third of the estate which they have accumulated by their joint industry. I speak of the real estate; for in the majority of estates, the personal property is expended in paying the debts and meeting the expenses of settlement. Now I appeal to any man here, whose estate is sufficient to support either or both in comfort, and give them Christian burial, and yet is so limited that the *use* of one third of it will support neither, whether his wife's interests are equally protected with his own, by the laws which "settle" his estate in the event of his dying first? Let me tell you a story to illustrate the "support" which, it is claimed, compensates the wife for the alienation of her earnings to the control of the husband. In my native town lived a single sister, of middle age. She had accumulated something, for she was capable in all the handicrafts pursued by women of her class. She married a worthy man, poor in this world's goods, and whose children were all settled in homes of their own. She applied her means, and by the persevering use of her faculties, they secured a snug home, valued at some five hundred dollars, he doing what his feeble health permitted towards the common interest. In the course of years he died, and two thirds of that estate was divided among *his* grown-up children; one third remaining to her. No, she could only have the *use* of one third, and must keep it in good repair,—the *law* said so! The *use* of two hundred dollars in a homestead, on condition of "*keeping it in good repair*," was the *legal* pittance of this poor woman, to whom, with the infirmities of age, had come the desolation of utter bereavement! The old lady patched and toiled, beautiful in her scrupulous cleanliness. The neighbors remembered her, and many a choice bit found its way to her table. At length she was found in her bed paralyzed; and never to the day of her death—three years—could she lift her hand or make known the simplest want of her nature; and yet her countenance was agonized with the appeals of a clear and sound

intellect And now, friends, how did the laws support and protect this poor widow? I will tell you: *They set her up at auction, and struck her off to the man who had a heart to keep her at the cheapest rate!* Three years she enjoyed the pauper's support, then died, and when the decent forms of a pauper's burial were over, *that third* was divided—as had been the other two thirds—among her husband's "well-to-do" children. (Great sensation.) And is it for *such* protection, that the love of fathers, brothers, husbands, "represents" woman in the Legislative Halls of the freest people on earth! Oh, release to us our own, that we may protect ourselves, and we will bless you! If this old lady had died first, the laws would have protected her husband in appropriating the entire estate to his comfort or his *pleasure!* I asked a man, learned and experienced in jurisprudence by a half century's discharge of the duties of Legislator, Administrator, Guardian, and Probate Judge, why the widow is denied absolute control of her third, there being no danger of creating "separate interests" when the husband is in his grave? He replied that it was to prevent a second husband from obtaining possession of the property of a first, to the defrauding of his children, which would be the result if the widow married again. Here the law giving the control of 68 the wife's earnings to the husband, is made legal reason for cutting her off at his death with a pittance, so paltry, that if too infirm to eke out a support by labor, she becomes a *pauper!* For if the law did not give the wife's earnings to the control and possession of a *first* husband, it would have no such excuse for excluding the second husband, or for defrauding herself, and her children by a subsequent marriage, of her earnings in the estate of the first husband. But having legalized the husband's claim to the wife's earnings, by a law of universal application, our legislators have come to legislate for widows on the ground that they have *no property rights in the estates which have swallowed up their entire earnings!* They have come to give the preference of rights to the children of the husband; and *sons*, as well as daughters, are defrauded, legislated out of their interest in their mother's property. For, the estate not being divided when the *wife* dies, the earnings of a first wife are divided among the children of a second wife, to the prejudice of the children of the first wife. We ask for *equal* property rights, by the repeal of the laws which divert the earnings of the wife from *herself and her heirs.*

O men! in the enjoyment of well-secured property rights, you beautify your snug homesteads, and say within your hearts, "Here I may sit under my own vine and fig-tree; here have I made the home of my old age." And it never occurs to you that no such blissful feeling of security finds rest in the bosom of your wives. The wife of a small householder reflects that if her husband should be taken from her by death, that home must be divided, and a corner in the kitchen, a corner in the garret, and a "*privilege*" in the cellar, be set off to her *use*, as if she were a *rat!* (Great sensation.) Or if she chooses the alternative of renting her fractional accommodations, and removing to other quarters, her sweet home associations—all that is left of her wedded love—are riven. The fireside that had been hallowed by family endearments, the chair vacant to other eyes, but to hers occupied by the loved husband still, all are desecrated by the law that drives her from the home which she had toiled

and sacrificed to win for herself and loved ones, and she goes out to die under a vine and fig-tree strange to her affections; and it may be, as in the case before mentioned, to find them wither away like Jonah's gourd, in absolute pauperism!

But I will tell you a story illustrating how women view these things. It is not long since a gentleman of my acquaintance, who had often been heard to give his wife credit for having contributed equally to his success in laying up a property, was admonished by disease of the propriety of making a "will." He called his wife to him and addressed her thus: "My dear, I have been thinking that the care of a third of my estate will be a burden to you, and that it will be better for you to have an annuity equal to your personal wants, and divide the rest among the children. The boys will supply you, if you should from any unforeseen circumstance need more. You can trust our boys to do what is right." "O yes, my dear," replied the wife, "we have excellent boys. You can intrust to them the care of *your* business; and I could let them act as *my* agents in the care of my thirds. And I think, husband, that will be better. For there is this to be considered: We have other children, and differences obtain in their circumstances. You have seen these things, and when one and another needed, you have opened your purse and given them help. When you are gone, there may still occur these opportunities for aiding them, and I should be glad to have it in my power to do as you have done. Besides, I have sometimes thought you had not done so well by the *girls*, and it would be very grateful to my feelings to make up the difference from my share of what our mutual efforts have accumulated."

Now, brothers, I appeal to you, whether you do not as much enjoy conferring benefits as receiving them? You have a wife whom you love. You present her with a dress, perhaps. And how rich you feel, that your love can give gifts! Women like to receive presents of dresses; I enjoy to have my husband give me dresses. (Laughter.) And women like to give presents to their husbands—a pair of slippers or something of that sort. But they have no money of their own, and their thought is, "If I give my husband this, he will say to himself. It's of no account; it all comes out of my pocket in the end!" That is the feeling which rankles in the hearts of wives, whose provident husbands do not dream that they are not better content with gifts than their rights. We like, all of us, to give good gifts to those we love; but we do not want our husbands to *give* us something to give back to them. We wish to feel, and have *them* feel, that our own good right hands have won for them the gift prompted by our affection; and that we are conferring, from our own resources, the same pleasure and happiness which they confer on us by benefits given. (Great cheering.)

[Nay, my friends, I thank you for the expression of your sympathy; but I can read your approval in your countenances, and need no other tokens of your encouragement. I shall be satisfied if I do not see you running out.]

But I had not exhausted the wrongs growing out of this alienation of the wife's right to her earnings. There is a law in Vermont—and I think it obtains in its leading features in most, if not all the States of the 70 Union—giving to the widow, whose husband dies childless, (she may or may not be the mother of children by a former marriage,) a certain portion of the estate, and the remaining portion to his heirs. Till the autumn of 1850, a Vermont widow, in such cases, had only one half the estate, however small; the other half was set off to her husband's heirs, if he had any; but if he had none, the *State put it in its own treasury*, leaving the widow to a pauper's fate, unless her own energies could eke out a living by economy and hard toil! A worthy woman in the circle of my acquaintance, whose property at marriage paid for a homestead worth five hundred dollars, saw this law divide a half of it to the brothers and sisters of her husband at his death, and herself is left in her old age, to subsist on the remaining half! In 1850, this law was so amended that the widow can have the whole property, if it be not more than one thousand dollars, and the half of any sum over that amount; the other half going to the husband's family; or if he happen not to leave any fiftieth cousin Tom, Dick or Harry, in the Old World or the New, she may have it *all!* Our legislators tell us it is right to give the legal control of our earnings to the husband, because "in law" he is held responsible for our support, and is obliged to pay our debts(?), and *must have our earnings to do it with!* Ah, I answer, but why don't the State give us some security then for support during *our* life; or if it looses the husband from all obligation to see that we are supported after he is in his grave, why, like a just and shrewd business agent, does it not release to us the "*consideration*" of that support—our earnings in the property which he leaves at his death?

I wish to speak still further on this point, if opportunity is given. I wish to show that the law taking from the wife the control of her earnings is a fruitful source of divorces. That to regain control of her earnings for the support of her children, many a woman feels compelled to sue for a *divorce*.

I would repent that I am not here in my own behalf, but in the hope that I can say something for the benefit of those who must suffer, because they cannot speak and show that they have wrongs to be redressed. It would ill become us, who are protected by love, or shielded by circumstances, to hold our peace while our sisters and their dependent children are mutilated in their hopes and their entire powers of existence, by wrongs against which we can protest till the legislators of the land shall hear and heed.

I was speaking of woman's right to her self-created resources as necessary means for the discharge of her duties. Created free agents that we might render to God an acceptable and voluntary service, our 71 Maker holds each human being accountable for the discharge of individual, personal responsibilities. Man cannot come up to the full measure of his own responsibilities; much less can he discharge his own and woman's too. Hence, in taking from woman any of the means

which God has given her ability to acquire, he takes from her the means which God has given her for the discharge of her own duties, and thereby adds to the burthen of his own undischarged responsibilities. In taking from us our means of self-development, men expect us to discharge our duties, even as the Jews were expected to make brick without straw. If we are not fitted to be capable wives and mothers—as contended by a gentleman on the stand yesterday—if we make poor brick, it is because our brother man has stolen our straw. Give us back our straw, brothers—there is plenty of it—and we will make you *good* brick. Brick we must make—men say so—then *give* us our straw; we cannot *take* it. We are suffering; the race is suffering from the ill performance of our duties. We claim that man has proved himself incompetent to be the judge of our needs. His laws concerning our interests show that his intelligence fails to prescribe means for the discharge of our duties. We are the best judges of the duties as well as the qualifications appropriate to our own sphere, and should hold in our own hands, in our own right, means for acquiring the one and comprehending the other.

At the time of the morning adjournment, I had spoken of woman's legal disabilities as wife and mother; and adverted to the law which diverts from the wife the control of her own earnings, as a fruitful source of divorces. Increasing facilities for divorce are regarded by a majority of Christian men as significant of increasing immorality, and tending to weaken the sanctity of the marriage relation. But an examination of legislative proceedings will show that sympathy for suffering woman is the real source of these increasing facilities; and I am frank to say that I consider man's growing consciousness of the wrongs to which wives and their helpless children are subject by the laws which put it in the power of the husband and father to wrest from them the very necessities of life, consuming their sole means of support—the earnings of the mother—as heralding a good time coming, when every woman, as well as every man, “may sit under her own vine.” Let me illustrate by relating one, among many incidents of the kind, which have fallen under my observation.

In travelling, some eighteen years ago, across the Green Mountains from Albany, a gentleman requested my interest in behalf of a young woman, whose history he gave me before placing her under my care, as 72 a fellow-passenger. Said he, She was born here; is an orphan and the mother of two young children, with no means of support but her earnings. She was a capable girl, and has been an irreproachable wife. From a love of the social glass, her husband in a few years became a drunkard and a brute; neglected his business, and expended their entire living. She struggled bravely, but in vain. At length, just before the birth of her youngest child, he pawned the clothing which she had provided for herself and babes, sold her only bed, and drove her into the streets to seek from charity aid in her hour of trial. After her recovery she went to service, keeping her children with her. But he pursued her from place to place, annoying her employers, collecting her wages by process of law, and taking possession of every garment not on her own or children's persons.



Under these circumstances, and by the help of friends who pitied her sorrows, she with her hatless and shoeless children was flying from their "*legal protector*," half clothed, to New Hampshire, where friends were waiting to give her employment in a factory till a year's residence should enable her to procure a divorce! Now, friends, if under New York laws this poor woman had enjoyed legal control of her own earnings, she might have retained her first home, supported her children, and, happy as a mother, endured hopefully the burden of unrequited affection, instead of flying to New Hampshire to regain possession of her alienated property rights, by the aid of "divorce facilities."

But, alas! not yet have I exhausted that fountain of wrongs growing out of the alienation of the wife's property rights. It gives to children *criminals* for guardians, at the same time that it severs what God hath joined together—the mother and her child! By the laws of all these United States, the father is in all cases the legal guardian of the child, in preference to the mother: hence, in cases of divorce for the criminal conduct of the father, the children are confided, by the natural operation of the laws, to the guardianship of the criminal party. I have a friend who, not long since, procured a divorce from her husband—a libertine and a drunkard—and by the power of *law* he wrested from her their only child, a son of tender age. Think of this, fathers, mothers! It is a sad thing to sever the marriage relation when it has become a curse—a demoralizing (?) thing; but what is it to sever the relation between mother and child, when that relation is a blessing to both, and to society? What is it to commit the tender boy to the training of a drunken and licentious father? The State appoints guardians for children physically orphaned; and much more should it appoint guardians for children morally orphaned. When it uses its 73 power to imprison and hang the *man*, it is surely responsible for the moral training of the *boy*! But to return: I have asked learned judges, why the State decrees that the father should retain the children, thus throwing upon the innocent mother the penalty which should fall upon the guilty party only? Say they, "It is because the father *has the property*; it would not be *just* (?) to burden the mother with the support of *his* children." O justice, how art thou perverted! Here again is the unrighteous alienation of the wife's earnings made the reason for robbing the suffering mother of all that is left to her of a miserable marriage—her children! I appeal to Christian men and women, who would preserve the marriage relation inviolate, by discouraging increased divorce facilities, if prevention of the necessity be not the better and more hopeful course?—prevention by releasing to the wife means for the independent discharge of her duties as a mother. And I appeal to all present, whether, sacred as they hold the marriage relation, Christian men have not proved to the world that there is a something regarded by them as even more sacred—the *loaf*! The most scrupulous piety cites Bible authority for severing the marriage tie; but when has piety or benevolence put forth its hand to divide to helpless and dependent woman an equal share of the estate which she has toiled for, suffered for, in behalf of her babes, as she would never have done for herself—only to be robbed of both? If the ground of the divorce be the *husband's* infidelity, the law allows him to retain the children and whole estate; it being optional with the court



whether the wife shall receive (in answer to her prayer to that effect) a pittance called alimony, to keep starvation at bay. If the babe at her breast is decreed to her from its helplessness, it is at her request formally laid before the Court; and the Court has no power even to decree a corresponding pittance for its support. The law leaves her one hope of bread for her old age which should not be forgotten—if *he dies first* she is entitled to dower! But let the wife's infidelity be the ground of divorce, and the laws send her out into the world, childless, without alimony, and cut off from her right of dower! What a contrast! He, the brutal husband, sits in the criminal's bench to draw a premium, be rid of an incumbrance: for what cares he for the severing of a tie that had ceased to bind him to his wife, that perhaps divided between him and a more coveted companion! If we *are* the *weaker* sex, oh, give us, we pray you, equal protection with the stronger sex!

Now, my friends, you will bear me witness that I have said nothing about woman's right to vote, or make laws. I have great respect for manhood. I wish to be able to continue to respect it. And when I 74 listen to Fourth of July orations and the loud cannon, and reflect that these are tributes of admiration paid to our fathers because they compelled freedom for themselves and sons from the hand of oppression and power, I look forward with greater admiration on their sons who, in the good time coming, will have won for themselves the unappropriated glory of having given justice to the physically weak—to those who could not, if they would, and would not, if they could, *compel* it from the hands of fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons! I labor in hope; for I have faith that when men come to value their own rights, as means of human happiness, rather than of paltry gain, they will feel themselves more honored in releasing, than in retaining the inalienable rights of woman.

Brothers, you ask us to accept the protection of your LOVE, and the law says that is sufficient for us, whether it feeds or robs us of our bread. You admit that woman exceeds man in self-sacrificing love; her devotion to you has passed into a proverb. Yet for all this, you refuse to intrust your interests to her love. You do not feel safe in your interests without the protection of equal laws. You refuse to trust even the mother's love with the interests of her children! How, then, do you ask of us—you who will not trust your interests to the love of a mother, wife, daughter, or sister—why do you ask of us to dispense with the protection of equal laws, and accept instead the protection of man's affection?

And now, I would offer in conclusion a few thoughts on education. I would say to my sisters, lest they be discouraged under existing disabilities from attempting it,—We can educate ourselves. It may be that you hesitate, from a supposed inferiority of intellect. Now I have never troubled myself to establish woman's intellectual equality. The inequality of educational facilities forbids us to sustain such a position by facts. But I have long since disposed of this question to my own satisfaction, and perhaps my conclusion will inspire you with confidence to attempt equal—I would hope *superior*—attainments, for man falls short of the intelligence within reach of his powers. We all believe that the

Creator of us all is both omniscient and omnipotent—wise and able to adapt means to the ends he had in view. We hold ourselves created to sustain certain relations as intelligent beings, and that God has endowed us with capabilities equal to the discharge of the duties involved in these relations. Now let us survey woman's responsibilities within the narrowest sphere to which any common-sense man would limit her offices. As a mother, her powers mould and develop humanity, intellectual, moral, and physical. Next to God, woman is the 75 creator of the race as it is, and as it shall be. I ask, then, has God created woman man's inferior? If so, He has been false to his wisdom, false to his power, in creating an inferior being for a superior work! But if it be true, as all admit, that woman's *responsibilities* are equal to man's, I claim that God has endowed her with *equal powers* for their discharge.

And how shall we develop these powers? My sisters, for your encouragement, I will refer to my own experience in this matter. I claim to be self-educated. Beyond a single year's instruction in a High School for young men and women, I have enjoyed no public educational facilities, but the Common School which our Green Mountain State opens to all her sons and daughters. Prevented by physical debility from longer availing myself of the severe discipline of a classical school, and nerved by faith in my ability to achieve equal attainments with my brother man, I resorted to books and the study of human nature, with direct reference to the practical application of my influence and my acquirements to my woman's work—the development of the immortal spirit for the accomplishment of human destiny. And my own experience is, that the world in which we live and act, and by which we are impressed, is the best school for woman as well as man. Practical life furnishes the best discipline for our powers. It qualifies us to take life as we find it, and leave it better than we found it. I have been accustomed to look within my own heart to learn the springs of human action. By it I have read woman, read man; and the result has been a fixed resolution, an indomitable courage to do with my might what my hands find to do for God and humanity. And in *doing* I have best learned my ability to accomplish; my capacity to enjoy. In the light of experience, I would say to you, my sisters, the first thing is to apply ourselves to the intelligent discharge of present duties, diligently searching out and applying all knowledge that will qualify us for higher and extended usefulness. Be always *learners*, and don't forget to teach. As individuals, as mothers, we must first achieve a knowledge of the laws of our physical and mental organisms; for these are the material which we work upon and the instruments by which we work; and to do our work well we must understand and be able to apply both. Then we need to understand the tenure of our domestic and social relations,— the laws by which we are linked to our kind. But I cannot leave this subject without briefly calling your attention to another phase of education.

Yourselves can judge if I had not a personal interest in the matter— but early in life my attention was called to examine the value of beauty 76 and accomplishments as permanent grounds of affection.

I could not believe that God had created so many homely women, and suffered all to lose their beauty in the very maturity of their powers, and yet made it our duty to spend our best efforts in trying to look pretty. We all desire to be loved; and can it be that we have no more lasting claims to admiration, than that beauty and those accomplishments which serve us only in the springtime of life? Surely our days of dancing and musical performance are soon over, when musical instruments of sweeter tone cry, "Mother." (Loud cheers.) What, then, shall we do for admiration, when stricken in years? Has not God endowed us with some lasting hold upon the affections? My sisters, I can only find lasting charms in that thorough culture of the mind and heart which will enable us to win upon man's higher and better nature. If you have beauty and accomplishments, these address themselves to man's lower nature—his passions; and when age has robbed you of the one, and him of the other, you are left unloved and unlovely! Cultivate then your powers of mind and heart, that you may become necessary to his better and undying sympathies. Aid him in all the earnest work of life; and secure his aid in your self-development for noble purposes, by impressing upon him that you are in earnest. Sell your jewelry, abate your expenditures for show; and appropriate your means, and time spent in idle visiting, to the culture of your souls. Then will his *soul* respond to your worth, and the ties that bind you endure through time and make you companions in eternity!

Let the daughters be trained for their responsibilities; and though you may say, "We do not know whom they will marry, whether a lawyer, a doctor, or a farmer," if you educate them for practical life by giving them general useful knowledge, their husbands can teach them the details of their mutual business interests, as easily as the new responsibilities of maternity will teach them the ways and means of being qualified to discharge *its* duties.

Educate your daughters for practical life, and you have endowed them better than if you had given them fortunes. When a young girl of fourteen, I said to my father: Give me education, instead of a "setting out in the world," if you can give me but one. If I marry and am poor, I can educate my children myself. If my husband should be unfortunate, the sheriff can take his goods, but no creditor can attach the capital invested here. [Touching her forehead.] (Loud cheers.) And, friends, my education has been not only *bread*, but an inexhaustible fund of enjoyment, in all the past of my life.

The Convention then adjourned till 2 P. M.

## AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Convention assembled according to adjournment, and Mrs. Paulina W. Davis read the Report of the Committee on Education:—

The Convention of last year, from which this Committee holds its appointment, *resolved*,

That Women should demand and secure Education in Primary and High Schools, Universities, Medical, Legal and Theological Institutions, as comprehensive and exact as their abilities prompt them to seek, and their capabilities fit them to receive.

The scheme of female education here proposed evidently looks to the ultimate employment of all the branches of knowledge which it embraces, in the various professions and avocations of actual life for which they are pursued and acquired by the sex that now monopolizes them; and, having like ends and objects in contemplation in the training of both sexes, of course, recommends a similar system of preparation for both.

The Convention, looking also at Education subjectively and with reference only to its most effective policy, affirmed, in other resolutions, that the prospect of such variety of useful and honorable employments in after life as may arouse Woman's ambition and call forth her whole nature, is as essential and as indispensable to successful female study, as are the hopes and aims which incite the male student to strenuous effort and great achievement. It went even further, and declared, "that *every* effort to educate Woman, until you accord to her her rights, and arouse her conscience by the weight of her responsibilities, is futile, and a waste of labor."

According to these views, no distinctions whatever are recognized in the ends and uses of the education of the sexes, and, of consequence, none are allowed in the substance and method of it. Moreover, mixed schools in all varieties of study, preparatory, collegiate and professional, seem to be intended by the general tenor of the resolutions, though it is nowhere formally expressed: in a word, equality of the sexes, in rights, faculties and offices, is assumed, and equal means, opportunities and liberties are demanded for them.

In the fair and proper meaning of these general propositions, your Committee concurs, but desires to guard the meaning of the terms and purport of the doctrines here employed from the current misconstructions of both friends and foes to the movement of female emancipation.

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By Equality, we do not mean either identity or likeness, in general or in particulars, of the two sexes; but, equivalence of dignity, necessity and use; admitting all differences and modifications which shall not affect a just claim to equal liberty in development and action.

In the respective sexes, the faculties having the same general use, character, and name, may differ greatly in force or in acuteness, in some quality of substance or of action, without being thereby divorced from each other in their drift toward the same objects, and without affecting the whole method and movement of either of them, so as to throw it out of harmony with the other. Indeed, Nature seems never to repeat herself, and no individual is equal in fact and form with any other in the universe; and it is quite consonant with this principle of creation that sex should impress still a different *kind* of variety upon all faculties, feelings and vital forces, than those of measure and degree, simply. And if it be so, it should, rather than any other sort of difference, be exempted from the degradation of relative inferiority. The wise and the less wise, the strong and the weak of the same sex, may more justly be ranked and valued against each other; for they are sufficiently alike in texture, quality, and mode of action, to admit of comparison and relative estimate; but the essential difference of sex refuses any logical basis for measurement, as by weight and scale. There is no philosophy in balancing light against heat, love against knowledge, force against agility, or mathematics against imagination, and deriving thence a sort of feudal subordination among the subjects of the sciences of chemistry, mental philosophy, and social and civil government.

The differences which we admit are, on the contrary, reciprocal, and really adjust the sexes to each other, and establish mutuality where otherwise there would be but an aggregation of like to like, without relief to monotony or increase in efficiency. It is only in materialism that addition of similars adds to their value: a fool is no help to a wise man in thinking, nor a coward to a brave one in daring and enduring. In psychical life there is this broad provision, that all difference in kind is available, and not *less or more* only is the measure of increase, but all variety is riches. Differences in moral and intellectual things, if regarded as antagonism to the extent of the unlikeness, would render any consistent system of organization impossible. Thus: Woman, from her conceded superiority in the family affections, would be entitled to exclusive control in the domestic function; her higher and more susceptible religious constitution would give her the monopoly of the *priestly* office; and her eminent moral endowments fit her for the rule of *social life* and *manners*, including all those municipal laws which regulate the 79 relations of men to each other in civil society. So that the professions of Law, Theology and Medicine, in nearly all its branches, would belong to her by right of special fitness, and men, by the same rule, would be wholly excluded. This principle of distribution would leave—what would it leave to the sole administration of men? Nothing but the ordering of those affairs, and the cultivation of those sciences, for which their ruder strength of muscle, greater bluntness of nerve, and firmer quality of logical reasoning, if they have all these or either of them, qualify them. In general terms, the cultivation of those physical sciences which direct in the use of mechanical forces, and those coarser competitions and ruder conflicts of men which foreign commerce and destructive wars require, would fall to the province of the sterner sex.

The ground and rule of this division of the sciences between the sexes, is the correspondence everywhere observed between internal powers and external instruments, that is, between the mental faculties and bodily structure; and therefore we strike the line of division among the mental qualifications for various uses, just where the eminent strength of the masculine structure requires it. For example, his greater physical energy demands superiority in those sciences which are concerned in mechanics; but the same principle denies his superiority in botany, chemistry and astronomy, unless to the extent that mathematics or the science of quantity, as it may be called, intervenes. But these points, be it noticed, are now made only in reference to the proposition which we are examining and for the present purpose in hand.

From considerations like these it must be obvious that the rule of reasoning by which the present order of things is directed, in the respects alluded to, if pushed to its proper consequences, must end in overthrowing the very wrong which is built upon it, and, after that, in overthrowing itself, too, by its sheer absurdity. We put the whole subject, therefore, upon very different grounds. We deny that there is any natural conflict between the parties which the prevalent wrong has arrayed against each other, or any necessary gradation, rank, or subordination, founded in distinction of sex and its inherent differences of constitution; and, especially, we deny that either sex must needs be restrained, or crippled, or enslaved, to advance the welfare of either, or to maintain the good order of society, or to advance the destiny of the race.

On the contrary, it seems to us clear above all controversy, that in the moral world the mere existence of a power or faculty is the divine warranty for its exercise, and necessarily implies its own right of full development and free use; and, consequently, that all questions of fitness and propriety must be determined by the simple fact of capability. A skillful mechanic never puts a wheel, or pulley, or spring too many in his machine; nor wastes material or power in making them too great or strong for their intended use. Human nature is at least as well and wisely adjusted to its offices and relations; and the inference is irresistible that whatever a woman can do at all she may do, and should learn to do as well as she can. It cannot be admitted that any power given her by her Creator was bestowed in mistake and must work mischief by its activities, and that such mistake requires correction by the superior wisdom of Man!

Further: When the argument for restraint is rested upon Woman's alleged *incapacities*, we might triumphantly answer, that where an actual and obvious incapability is seen and known among men, their eligibility is not therefore taken away, but that incapacity is found in itself a sufficient bar to great abuses, and a sufficient protection of the interests to be affected; at least, no other is adopted. Certain men, ay, multitudes of them, are unfit for lawyers, physicians, governors, and military officers; yet, the chance and hope are left freely open to all these as well as to the most

capable without mischief, and the world gets along as well as it deserves, and as well as it wishes, notwithstanding. Incompetency in all these cases (and they are myriads) is not excluded from office, rank, and honorably remunerated service by legal impediments, or the force of custom and opinion, which are quite as rigorous and absolute in their rule. Justice and consistency alike demand that the avenues of hope and life shall be opened as fairly and freely to the excluded sex as to the notoriously incompetent of the other, and there can be no doubt that it may be done in every department of human affairs as safely, to say the least. The common sense of the world will be as able to protect itself in the one case as in the other; and besides, the Providence of Heaven is responsible for the safe working of all the forces which He has provided for the conduct of human life. If women really cannot practice medicine, law, and theology, well and safely, the sick, the suitors, and the suffering sinners will discover the fact, and there is nothing specially put in danger by the trial except the illiberal opinion which refuses it. But this objection is in itself so weak and unwarranted, that it may be justly set down as merely arrogant and selfish. Medical schools, for instance, are really not closed against women because they *cannot* acquire the knowledge of the profession and practice it successfully, but because they *can* do both, and threaten very seriously to wrest the business from the hands which have so long usurped it. And, surely, there is no likelihood that 81 the "weaker sex" would betray the science into greater confusion and disgrace than the dozen or twenty conflicting systems have done, which now divide and distract the world about their rival merits. No, no, gentlemen; theory and practice are not so well established in medicine as to prove the sole capability of the sex which has appropriated its authority and delivered its oracles for the last few centuries of modern history. The world has lost its respect for the pompous mystery of the craft, and the chaos you have created where we looked for light and certainty, disproves your proud pretension of exclusive fitness in the sex which bears the responsibility. Beards and wigs have gone so nearly into bankruptcy in this business, that they cannot refuse the fresh partners and increased capital that are wanting to repair their falling fortunes!

And is theology in any better condition? Are its hundred sects, with each its vital difference of opinion, ready to come into court and answer for the wisdom and worthiness of their stewardship, and defend their claim of superior fitness against the reserved abilities of the race?

Incompetency, indeed! Why, this is proved by positive failure, upon fair trial, against the usurping sex, and it does not lie gracefully in their mouths to make the objection against the excluded party. In the soberest earnest, there is nothing in the condition of the sciences which we have named to warrant the presumptions on which women are barred out of them, nor anything to terrify even feminine mediocrity of talent with apprehension of contrasted unworthiness.



Law may be exceedingly difficult of achievement, and we are inclined to think it is so when we observe that the individual that here and there in a nation, and once or twice in a century, distinguishes himself in the profession, is thereupon regarded as almost *superhuman*; but this, to our blunt way of thinking, only renders it every way more probable that fresh hearts and clear heads, which never could or would comprehend its subtleties, are the very agents which the abused world wants to clear away the incumbering rubbish, and replace it with a clearer and truer system. It is owing to the felt necessity of such change that the States of the Union which have the idea of American progress are all rapidly making their judges elective by the people, hoping thereby to get gradually rid of the dead weight of the dark ages in our system of jurisprudence. This is in fact another confession of incompetency, and a movement toward that freedom from absurd authority which will be complete only when woman's tact lightens man's drudgery in the administration of affairs.

This may seem over bold and direct, and wanting in reverence, if not 82 in sober earnestness; but it may as well be said here as elsewhere, that the best intelligence and integrity of the age feel the faults we censure, and are almost hopeless of a thorough remedy, while the administration continues in the hands of those who are by their education made perpetual successors to the evil inheritance and devoted to its continuance. The democratic method, which is reversing as fast as it can all the precedents of antiquity in this matter of office and civil and social trusts, is nothing else than a protest against the claim of exclusive qualification by the old incumbents and their legitimate disciples. This rising idea we push forward to the full truth which there is in it. To the popular cry, *Admit the people* to the temples of their own religion, to the bench of their own Courts, to the halls of their own Legislatures, to the doctorate of the learned professions, and the throne of their own sovereignty, we add, *Admit the whole people*, if ye would be true to your own idea and worthy of your own liberty.

It is simply a matter of fact, and, therefore, of observation and not of argument, that a woman will reach the justice of a case by such intellect as God has given her, helped by her fine intuitions and nice moral instincts, where the cramp logic of a mere lawyer shall utterly fail to find either a reason or a precedent. In great confidence we venture the assertion, now, that the science of law is destined to find its necessary regeneration at last in that special aptness for moral truth which is the characteristic of the female mind. Boldly but warily we put these points in the conviction, which rests, woman-like, upon its own intrinsic clearness and trusts itself to its self-evident proofs, that the several mischiefs of the learned professions we so freely criticise arise out of the exclusion of that refining and correcting element which woman's mind alone can supply in all the interests and uses which these professions are intended to subserve.

There is another pretense upon which the existing restraints are fastened, like handcuffs, upon womanhood, to wit: the indelicacy, indecorum, or impropriety of such greater range and freedom as we claim for her. To this, it is quite sufficient to reply, that the greater delicacy, purity, and sensitiveness of the sex, are the very things of all others that can best take care of themselves in such exposure, which, be it observed, is to be in all cases free and voluntary, and so a matter of taste and choice. And is it too much, or too severe to say, that women must be better fitted to settle all questions which concern their own delicacy than the admitted obtuseness and coarseness of men in these respects supposes them to be? If they really are just what this notion ascribes to them, they are the best guardians of their peculiarity, by the natural rule 83 that makes Michael Angelo the standard in Statuary, Newton in Astronomy, Handel in Music, and, in general, the divine right of fitness by which the highest endowed in any gift or grace gives the law which governs in its proper province. The officious interference of men in such matters proves the want of the qualifying modesty, and is simply impertinent where it is not also arrogant and meanly tyrannical; and our answer to all such assumption is—Open the possibilities of active life to woman freely, and by her own instincts and fitnesses she will find her place, as certainly as the planets and their satellites find their orbits and movement by their own proper attractions and repulsions. Only do not legislate presumptuously and despotically in matters wherein sovereign Nature has already ordained the law, and can guard it well by adequate rewards and penalties without the help of customs and conventions.

But let it suffice for this whole argument, that we do not claim for woman parallelism, equality, or superiority of constitution, capacity or office, as against men, but we merely claim the freedom of her proper life, whatever that may prove to be upon fair trial; we claim the privilege and the opportunity for unfolding all her powers, in the conditions and with the helps most favorable for the possibilities of growth, and the full play of all those hopes, incentives, and prospects, whose monopoly has developed man unto her master, and enslaved and degraded her in the proportion that they have been withheld from her.

Esteeming this position as clear and secure as it is reasonable and just, we pass now to notice, in very general statement, and in as brief terms, the policy of education as it exists at present in reference to the two sexes respectively.

There are in the United States about one hundred and twenty Literary Colleges, forty-two Theological Seminaries, forty-seven Law Schools, and forty Medical Colleges. Of these two hundred and fifty public institutions of learning in its higher grades and most valuable directions, not a half dozen admit women to their privileges! They are endowed by both public and private munificence, for Government has taken education into the care of the State, and made its support compulsory as any

other duty of citizenship upon the community. Scarcely a man of distinction in the nation but has received the State's bonus for accepting his education; he has been educated at the expense of the Public Treasury, and afterward rewarded with honors and offices, both public and private, for the improvement he has made of it. The graduate of Harvard receives each the sum of one thousand dollars over and above the amount he pays for the expenses of his tuition. This is the gratuity to graduates in the literary department only; but to the student of law 84 there is appropriated, beside, the sum of \$86; to each medical student \$27; and the divinity student takes about \$1000.

This is a sample, a liberal one, perhaps, but it presents the case and exhibits the rule. And let it be understood that no exception is taken to this beneficent appropriation of the funds provided. Would it were ten times more, and proportionately more efficient for all the purposes which liberal education should answer in the world.

But how stands the other side of the account? Oberlin, in Ohio, and the Central College of New York, are the only literary institutions of the higher grade which admit women to their advantages. Medical colleges are so numerous and so easily established, that we find three or four in Ohio, one or two in New York, and one in Vermont, which raise no question of sex with their pupils. But this gain is so recent that it has as yet afforded but small fruits, and not much even in the way of assurance for the future. Among the older medical institutions, Geneva College opened her doors to one female student, but closed them behind her so soon as she had honorably won their diploma and opened the dangerous example to her sex. A separate school, with professors and a meager appropriation for medical education, has been opened, within the last two years, at Philadelphia, and has now in attendance a class of about twenty-five women. Let it be, however, understood that we do not ask for these institutions. We claim for our sons the purifying influence of women through all their educational career, as we claim equal developments for our daughters. And here let me refer to the testimony of both students and professors where women have been educated. From Cleveland we have the assurance that Nancy Elizabeth Clark will graduate at the close of the next term; and that the influence of that one pure, noble woman, capable of retaining all her womanly graces and health of soul, has done more to restrain and elevate the students of last year, than all the moral lectures and rules of the college combined.\*

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\* We have since learned that the Cleveland Medical Colledge have refused to admit women hereafter, on the ground of expediency.

Below this higher style of schools, and above the common elementary and grammar schools, there are the following establishments for women and girls, and none other, in the Union: A Normal school for young ladies in Massachusetts; two Normal schools for both sexes in the same State; one for both sexes at Albany; and one for young ladies at Philadelphia. If there be another in the

nation, it has escaped our 85 search. These are more or less supported by public contributions, some of them wholly at the expense of the State or city in which they are located. And we must add to the account a School of Design for women, something more than two years old, in Philadelphia, established at first and sustained alone by Mrs. Sarah Peter of that city, and now for some months under the able care of the Franklin Institute. In this institution, drawing, designing, wood-engraving and lithographing are already taught with great success. The pupils number about sixty, and are of a class of women just such as are best fitted to make the experiment with—intelligent, respectable, and earnest in their purpose, and successful beyond all expectation in their first attempt. The example of this excellent institution has been followed, recently, in Boston, and bids fair to attain equally high results. The provision for the support of these two schools is as yet casual and temporary, but we cannot doubt that they will secure themselves in the public regard, and become as permanent and strong as they are beneficent. What a contrast in the two sides of this picture! On the one side, millions of money, one entire profession of talented men, and national and individual enthusiasm, all devoted to the development of the masculine mind in all directions which can give it strength and brightness, and win for it honor and wealth. On the other side, the late reluctant grace of a pittance, here and there vouchsafed within the last year or two to the importunity of appeals that were often scorned even at the moment they were granted!

Not yet a law school, nor a theological, for Oberlin does not ordain her pupils, though she instructs them, nor any number of medical schools of note, have made our sex welcome to their privileges and benefits. And the Literary Colleges are but two of one hundred and twenty which admit them to equal favor with their happier brethren.

We present the startling facts to our brethren's faces—we spread them before the world, and ask its justice.

We say that Women are not proved incapable, but that they are kept in ignorance; first, by the denial of systematic education, ample and adequate; and next, by the withdrawal and withholding of all those useful and honorable posts, places and functions, from them as a sex, which are the proper incentives to the successful pursuit of learning.

We do not go so far as to say that eminent attainment is in *every* case impossible while its due rewards are denied, for there are glorious examples of women whom the innate and irrepressible impulse of great capacity has sufficed, and who have surprised, while they have rebuked, the world, by the energy of their spontaneous self-development; but we do complain that nothing less than that genius which can create its 86 own occasions and erect its own monuments in the very face of besieging foes, may suffice to show a woman great and noble in word and deed. We complain that a woman must unsex herself, in the world's judgment, if she would give outlet to the highest

life within her; that she is shunned and mobbed if she dares to do anything that might be noticed in the newspaper; that she is required to starve either soul or body, or both, rather than endeavor for life and independence in any walk of business or work, however suitable it may be, if it has been hitherto forbidden to her. And we complain that the gallantry which flatters her as a menial, a toy, and an idiot, should mock, insult and crush her, so soon as she endeavors to be only a Woman.

It will not be required of us here to argue the benefits and blessings of appropriate culture of the rational and moral faculties of our common nature. That subject is at rest with respect to the favored sex, and there can be no difficulty or hesitation about applying the general principle to all the cases which in any way come under it; but we have a suggestion to make which every way concerns our argument for the emancipation of Woman.

Hitherto restrained, as a general rule, to the duties and drudgeries of the domestic relations, and cultivated chiefly, when cultivated at all, for the delights of her affectional nature, the heart is disproportionately developed and she is made a creature of pure feeling and passionate impulse. All aspiration, all heroism, all nobleness, all distinction, tolerated and encouraged in her, is in the direction of the passions and emotions only. Intellectual culture of any kind which might abate, or steady, or balance feeling, is held unwomanly; and the sex is enslaved by the disproportionate activity of its own distinguishing traits. We demand a due cultivation of her intellectual faculties of every kind, and in every department of business that invites; in order, mainly, that she may be delivered from the bondage imposed through the over-strength of her heart, exaggerated by the weakness of her head.

Madness is a fixed idea. Monomania is the concentration of the whole mental force in the actions of a single faculty. Due distribution of sensibility and of action is the health, as well of the mind as of the body. Symmetry, harmony, and balance are the conditions of beauty, energy, and integrity. Whatever accidental incapacity women may be charged with; whatever indifference they may exhibit to their own highest well-being, is owing to the monstrous wrongs of that system which has warped them into the weakness of feeling, unguarded and undirected by an equally developed understanding.

In the material world the various objects are put to the use in which they best serve the lord of the creation. This is right; for they have their whole existence for his uses. But *human* beings have a destiny of their own to fulfill, and it is a wanton desecration of their nature to cultivate and employ only its strongest points, because these best subserve a master's interests; and, with the same view, to crush out all the rest of the faculties of the immortal soul.

It is true that the gentler sex are loveliest of the two in the offices of affection and the relations of the family and the home; but, the argument of the oppressor is, that she should therefore be limited and restrained to the domestic sphere in all the aims and activities of her life. Would he like the even application of the principle which would exclude him from the realm and the rule that he claims in the heart, because of his comparative inferiority? This would be equity; but it is not a balance of rights on which the usurpation builds itself. In plain terms, the virtues in which the feminine character is preëminent, are esteemed for their *use*, their value as a *commodity*, and a convenience and delight to her owner.

The tempter of mankind is represented as destroying his victims by using their passions to induce their ruin. This is *diabolical* only because of the malignity of its purpose. The abuse, the degradation and ruin of "the sex" is accomplished through the same agencies, but with kindlier intentions. It is therefore only *selfish* and *savage*, relieved by the mixture of tenderness which the lower instincts supply.

The peculiarities of her sex, its very excellences which are her charm, are, also, her bane. We demand education, therefore, in every direction that can give efficiency to the intellect, light to the feelings, and harmony and dignity to the whole character, for the sake of that moral and rational liberty which depends upon the integral development of the whole being together.

It would be in the drift of our present reflections, and greatly contribute to the completeness of our argument, to dwell in detail upon the difference in range, thoroughness and value of the branches of education taught to the male and female pupils under the prevailing system. In the well-established, colleges for male students, instruction as thorough as the student can receive is given in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, Spanish and French; Mathematics, comprehending Geometry and Algebra, plane and spherical Trigonometry, and analytical Geometry; Ancient and Modern History; Rhetoric, Psychology, Logic, Ethics, Political Economy, the Evidences of Religion, Chemistry, Botany, Physics, Mineralogy, Geology, Astronomy, and practice in Composition and Elocution. And after a course which, added to the preparatory term 88 of study, covers seven or eight years, at the age of twenty or twenty-one the graduate commences another term of three or four in the study of his special profession.

The training of the girl—we say girl, for before the maturity of womanhood arrives, she is taken home to domestic duties—in all points of range, value and thoroughness, is so inconsiderable, compared to this scheme of masculine education, that it may well account for all the difference in useful attainment with which she is reproached.

It would be a high service rendered to the cause of female education, to designate the branches which she should study as an average qualification for ultimate use and application, and to indicate the duration of the term, as well as all the other essential conditions of adequate mental cultivation. But it happens, that among the other well-grounded charges against the policy which excludes women from their fair share in this great interest, there lies, also, this additional blame, that the science and art of systematic education are by no means so well settled and adjusted, either in principles or details, that we can assume the utility of any known method, and claim it with or without accommodations to the peculiarities of the female mind and functions.

It is confessed that the school-books in use are not well adapted to the instruction of youth; and teachers differ upon the method of instruction as much as they do in any other matter of opinion which divides men in judgment and practice.

We cannot be expected here to discuss systems of scholastic training, to analyze particular objects of study, and to indicate a scale and sequence of educational departments, as well as argue their fitness to the minds and offices of women.

The utmost that can be wisely and safely done in the present state of knowledge and experience, is to lay down the great outlines which principles warrant and require, and leave particulars to the discovery of practice and experiment conducted in the light which right and justice afford. The true system of education for either man or woman is yet only in expectancy; the proper subjects of study during pupilage have not yet been brought regularly within reach; besides, the most available of all attainments, and the best adapted to the individual, are made in the actual business of life. This Committee will not, therefore, undertake to be specific or precise in the matter, method, apparatus, and specialities of that culture which ought to be provided for women, but must content ourselves with such general considerations as we have found time and space to urge, and submit this, the most important of 89 all our inquiries, to the largest reflection and most earnest action of all its enlightened advocates.

Your Committee is clear in the justice and propriety of demanding for women—

Liberty and opportunity for development of all their faculties by such methods of systematic education as may be best adapted to the end;

The entire range of studies required for their thorough training in every department of human knowledge;



Equal access with the male sex to *all* the provisions of public and private munificence for the advance of human learning;

And all unrestrained by any imagined difference of capacity or artificial difference of destiny, which must repress aspiration and paralyze effort, and leaving all accommodations due to expediency as well as to intrinsic necessity to be determined by actual experiment, as it may result when the truth of nature is sought with honest purposes by the light of free principles.

Mrs. Davis concluded her report by offering the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

*Resolved, therefore,* That we, as wives and mothers, will do our utmost to promote the highest education of our children at our colleges and institutions of learning, without distinction of sex, challenging the same privilege for our daughters as already accorded to our sons, making the public funds available to both in the process of mental development.

Mrs. Coe, of Ohio, then again took the stand, and spoke at some length on the legal and social disabilities of woman, and urging her claims as an equal with man in every department of life.

Miss Antoinette L. Brown then took the stand and spoke as follows:—

I fear I shall not be able to enchain the attention of the audience as the ladies have who have preceded me. I have not, until to-day, spoken in public more than once during the last six months. Of course I feel the influence of this. I cannot throw off the diffidence which is natural to every woman, who is not accustomed to addressing public audiences. Yet I will do the best I can, and shall speak from a full soul.

The sphere of woman never yet has remained fixed and permanent for any considerable length of time. Read the annals of the past. As we trace page after page the records of cruel wrong and oppression, we find them ever changing and varying in the dark details; and yet in 90 respect to the utterly false estimate of the female character, there is one almost unbroken chain of evidence, from the earliest snatches of tradition until the spread of Christianity and civilization. Let a heathen of the present day come into our midst, and give us his idea of woman and her sphere. The blood would flush our cheeks with shame and honest indignation; yet how different would be the respective ideas of the Indian, the Arab, and the Chinese. But not only has the position of woman been for ever changing, and so diverse in different countries, but, since the prevalence of Christian principles, it has been steadily rising to honor and dignity. She has been lifted from a lower grade of degradation

than man, and placed upon a platform more on a level with his own than that which she formerly occupied.

Now if, since the prevalence of civilization and enlightenment, the voice of public opinion has been nearly unanimous in marking out for her an appropriate field of action—if her rights and privileges are in Christian countries essentially the same—if her duties and occupations are marked and definite—if the community in general have learned to feel satisfied with her position—then, perhaps, we might safely conclude that the voice of Nature and Revelation had at length been heard, and regarded—that she had found her proper level in society; but if, on the contrary, there has long been an under-current of dissatisfaction on the part of woman herself, and also of many wise and good men—the acknowledged philanthropists of the age—and if that tide has at length burst forth, as if by general consent, in almost every part of the civilized world, and is already strongly setting in opposition to the tide of popular sentiment, then, ought we not at least to search diligently for the disturbing cause?

A great moral civil war, upon the subject of woman's true sphere, is already being sternly waged. Each faction is erecting its artificial barrier around her charmed realm, and issuing its mandate, "Thus far, woman, mayest thou go; but no farther." The American public seems to have a great horror against the idea of woman's becoming a public character. Yet Jenny Lind may lift her voice higher, and throw it farther, and deeper, into the hearts of a greater number of hearers, than perhaps any other person in the whole world. The music-breathing Parodi, Madam Bishop, Catherine Hayes, and our own home-born, home-bred daughters of song, may electrify vast audiences, and still wear the evergreen laurels of public applause. Why is this? Is it any more immodest, any more unladylike, to speak to an audience in the simple, natural tones of the human voice, than to sing to them? Oh, certainly! This, then, may account for certain musical intonations and cadences, which are common to certain religious denominations. Our Quaker sisters may sing the words of wisdom into the hearts of their hearers, with the most perfect propriety, for words all wrapped up in song have a magic potency over the human heart. They are feminized, made harmonious with good taste.

Again, this same taste seems to be in possession of an exceedingly delicate optical instrument, which might be fitly called the *Humbugoscope*. When a lady is addressing an audience of her own sex, if the hearers are in possession of this quizzing-glass, the lady-orator seems clothed in the utmost purity of thought, and propriety of manner; but let a gentleman come into the assembly, and under the transforming masculine influence, the clear, transparent glass becomes dark and cloudy; the company are scandalized at the immodesty of the poor speaker's appearance, though to one whose natural vision is unaided by the Humbugoscope, she looks, speaks, and acts, in every respect,

precisely as she did when only in the feminine presence. Oh, consistency! thou art indeed a rare jewel! Shakspeare says:

"The toad, ugly and venomous, Wears yet a precious jewel in his head." Our American consistency in regard to woman's position, must be the jewel that has been extracted from this very member of the toady fraternity. (Laughter.) We might follow it through bogs, and fens, and marshes, till we were all perfectly satisfied in respect to its amphibious character; but we abandon the pursuit from the fear of being left to struggle in a slough of despondency at the utter hopelessness of ever being able to make this inestimable treasure our own.

But it is asked, "Is there not an instinctive feeling in the human heart, which leads us to shrink from the idea of woman's becoming a public teacher?" We grant there is a vague, indefinite something within us, which does lead us to feel that woman's sphere is private life. But why is this? The principles of association are strong in every heart. We have known woman and loved her only in private life. The memory of a little, light, free-hearted sister is twined all around the pleasing recollections of our childhood. We have learned to love the voice of woman, gentle and confiding, as it greeted us in the social circle; but when, until recently, has the public even known, in this latter age, of a woman's lifting up her voice upon the platform? But how many examples, like those which have been presented to us this evening, would it require, before this class of associations should be changed? Has any mind in this congregation been shocked at anything which we have heard 92 this evening? at anything which we have seen this evening? Do we not all feel that woman can be modest and womanly on a public platform?

Let her go forward and practically show that she can be true to her own nature, and all this sensitiveness of taste will be entirely removed. It is a perverted nature and a perverted taste which would lead us to shrink from engaging in any occupation to which we were adapted. Woman must live down the caricatures and coarse wit upon this subject, which now fill the public mind to overflowing. Let her go forward and live above public sentiment, and public sentiment will come up to her standard.

Woman's position is not fixed. No, it is rising. The platform upon which she stands is being elevated, and she shall yet stand side by side with man. Why should she not? Public opinion answers, "Woman is inferior—woman is in subjection to man." Public opinion adds with renewed emphasis, "The Bible tells her to be in subjection to her husband." Now, we freely grant this latter assertion. The Bible does instruct woman to be in subjection to man; it does command the wife to be in subjection to the husband. But the Bible also commands the man to be in subjection to the woman; it beseeches the husband to be in subjection to the wife. Not in just these exact words, it is true, but virtually, certainly, emphatically. The world seems to have overlooked or forgotten that class of passages.

I will quote some of them, giving chapter and verse, that you may read for yourselves. "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." 1 Peter v. 5. Be subject: that is the same phrase that is applied to women. "Yea, all of you be subject one to another." Have we not forgotten this class of passages? How often we women have quoted to us the 5th of Ephesians, 22: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands," &c. Almost always, I believe invariably, when I have heard that passage quoted, the friends forgot to preface it with the preceding verse: "Submitting yourselves one to another, in the fear of God." Why do we not quote this, as well as the other passages?

Again, in 1 Corinthians xvi. 15, 16, we read: "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboreth." Now, it is probable that this household of Stephanas had some women in it. "I beseech you, brethren, that you submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboreth." It may be—we can make the supposition, unnatural 93 as it might seem—that there were no women in the household of Stephanas. But suppose it were so; the Apostle just as explicitly commands men to be subject to women as though there certainly were women in that household. "And to every one that helpeth with us and laboreth." Now, there is no one of the sacred writers who so frequently tells us of his helpers in the Lord—often mentioning them by name, and holding up before us the character of those who were colaborers with him—no one of the Apostles so delights in recurring to these brethren and sisters beloved, as does St. Paul. Oftentimes, when speaking of the husband and wife, he gives the name of the wife first—as in the case of Aquila and Priscilla; he sometimes has it Priscilla and Aquila. Yet who has been assailed with so much gratuitous abuse and misrepresentation upon this subject as St. Paul? It was the Apostle Paul who wrote, "There is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." He granted no privileges to sex, and yet the Apostle Paul has been the most slandered of all the Apostles. He has been made the scape-goat, to bear away into the wilderness the sins of all believers in Christianity who would take from woman privileges which the early Apostles and early Christians freely granted to her. There has been a great falling off in this respect in these latter days. But let man no longer lay to St. Paul's charge that which must rest upon himself. Let it be repented of. "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now calleth all men everywhere to repent."

Why is it that our commentators, when quoting those passages which enjoin submission from one to another, always refer to passages like these: "In honor preferring one another;" "In lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves," &c.? It is because they feel the kind of subjection which the Apostle has the credit of enjoining to woman inconsistent with their manly dignity. And so it is; and with womanly dignity also.

But do you ask, "Why did St. Paul find it necessary so often to enjoin even a Christian deference or submission from the wife to the husband, while he did not enforce the same from the husband towards the wife?" Upon the same principle that he exhorted the servant to cultivate the same Christ like spirit toward even a "froward" master. There is danger that oppression will engender bitterness and hate in the heart of the oppressed; but the Bible inculcates a Christian meekness in receiving even wrong and injury from another, while at the same time there is a harmonious liberty to protest against that wrong, and even to rebel against it if necessary.

Again, it may be asked, Why was not the husband commanded not 94 to rule over the wife, if such rule was wrong? We answer, the soul and spirit of the whole gospel is such a command: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." We venture to affirm that no man would ever desire or could ever feel it just to be required to submit his will to the irresponsible will of his wife! But the inspired writers have been still more explicit. What is meant by the command, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it;" "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies"? When men love their wives in this way, what will become of the formidable right of ultimate appeal? A man ready to give himself for his wife, and yet compelling her to obey! Nonsense! Where love is, there is no real disagreement. If the matter of difference comes legitimately into the wife's department, let her decide in regard to it; it is her right. If it more nearly relates to the husband, let him have his own way; it is his right. If it affects them equally, let each esteem the other better than himself. This is Christian submission. But if there is no love—no Christ-like spirit of mutual honorable deference to the opinions of others in the marriage relation, there is no true marriage; but if there is still to be a legal partnership, let difficulties be decided, like other business arrangements, by umpire, or by agreement. Let them take turns in swaying the scepter of ultimate appeal. This, if in accordance with the teachings of Deity, is certainly making him "no respecter of persons."

It has been well said, that Christ never talked of sex. His teachings were to the race. The *Apostles* found it necessary to correct the abuses which arose from disordered social relations; but when truly understood, their teachings will be found to be in harmony with the instructions of the great Teacher. For want of time, we refer only to a single point of the Apostolic creed.

The Bible, like other books, is capable of more than one interpretation. No man professes to understand the whole of its contents. So as the world progresses, as new light is disseminated in our minds, the ideas which we receive from the sacred text must of necessity change—must be variously modified; not that its teachings are not unchangeable—are not for ever in harmony with the law of benevolence—but because of our own imperfections and the constant growth of thought. Yet the law written in the *book* will be found always in keeping with that engraved on the *heart*, and

revealed in all the ever-changing manifestations of Nature. When, therefore, the equality in rights and privileges which originate in our human nature is fully developed, we shall find with pleasure that men and women stand upon the *same Bible platform*. Woman 95 may then make the world her sphere of action, and she will never be told that she is acting inconsistent with her position as the subordinate of man.

Is it strange that woman has so seldom distinguished herself as an actor in the great drama of public life? Should her want of proficiency be taken as a proof of her inability? Bind her energies with the fetters of law, both sacred and secular—plant upon her brow the thorny crown of public opinion, and put into her hand its leaden scepter, and what can you expect?

Many of us look indeed upon a promised land which we are yet to inherit; but “all the people that we see in it are men of a great stature. And there we see the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we are in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we are in their sight.” No wonder, then, that more than ten out of twelve of us bring up an evil report of the land; but a remnant will yet surely go in to possess it. We fear not the people therein; “their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us.” Our hope and our trust is in Him; so surely as he is the God of the Bible and of Nature, so surely as he is the God who loves harmony, he will help us to carry forward this work. We feel that he is helping us; and “in his name we go against this great multitude.” (Loud cheers.)

Mehitable Haskell, of Gloucester, said:—

Perhaps, my friends, I ought to apologize for standing here. Perhaps I attach too much importance to my own age. This meeting, as I understand it, was called to discuss the question of Woman's Rights. Well, I do not pretend to know exactly what woman's *rights* are; but I know that I have groaned for forty, yea, for fifty years, under a sense of woman's *wrongs*. I know, that even when a girl, I groaned under the idea that I could not receive as much instruction as my brothers could. I wanted to be what I felt that I was capable of becoming; but this I could not do, for public opinion denied to females the intellectual culture that was granted to males. I want to say to the audience, that I rejoice in the progress that has been and is being made. I rejoice that there are so many women here; it denotes that they are waking up to some sense of their situation. One of my sisters has observed that she had received great kindness as a wife, mother, sister and daughter. I, too, have brethren in various directions—both those that are natural and those that are spiritual brethren, as I understand the matter; and I rejoice to say, I have found—I say it to the honor of my brothers—I have found more men than women who were impressed with the wrongs 96 under which our sex labors, and felt the need of reformation. I rejoice in this fact.

Mrs. Sarah Redlon, of Boston, was then introduced to the audience, and spoke as follows:—

Women have been hardly considered thinking beings, much less beings accountable to God for the improvement of their time, their feelings, and their opportunities for doing good. The doctrine has been, as you well know, that the God of the Universe is the Lord and Lawgiver of man, and that man is the lord—the ruler, the lawgiver, and even the God—of woman. I said, the doctrine had been that man was to be taken by woman as her lord and master, to decide for her what course she should pursue in almost every department of life. She has hardly been considered a responsible being. She has nearly lost her identity. She has been taught to worship man; to bow down to him, and to yield obedience to him, as she would to God. All the teachings which she has had in years that are past, especially religious and moral teachings, have come from man—especially from the ministers, the *professed* ministers, of the gospel. It has been said that man might make laws for her which she should be compelled to obey—that he should be her judge as to the moral and spiritual law—that he should rule over her entirely. The doctrine has been that found in Genesis, “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee,” and that this was the command given by Jehovah to man, and that he was bound to exercise this authority over woman. It has been thought proper that man should be the entire manager of woman; and she, in her ignorance and servility, has consented to be managed by man, even as the wild beasts have consented to be managed by human beings.

Now, our very nature has rebelled against all this. There has always been something in our spiritual nature which has revolted at the idea of this management of our whole being on the part of the “lords of creation,” so called. I said that woman had received her teaching from man, and more especially from ministers of the gospel. And what has been that teaching? Why, it has been that woman's sphere is in the private walks of domestic life. Men have been successful deceivers, and have even accomplished the object of confining woman, to a great extent, to the private walks of of domestic life, so that she has indeed and in truth grown to be like a plant in the shade. All her energies, moral, religious, and intellectual, have become enervated. Oh, how low has woman been degraded! She has been satisfied with trifles and vanity, and tickled with a straw. Flattery, fulsome, unmeaning flattery, has been her meat and her drink; and that is what she has needed to support that vanity which has been by far the most prominent trait in her character. She has been taught that it was for her to manage the affairs of the family; to take care of the children; to attend to the cooking; to be sure to provide well for the wants of the stomachs of men; and sometimes I have thought that she had reduced herself to the degrading condition of being a mere stuffer of the stomachs of men, and of her own, too. Woman generally may have consented to become engaged in drudgery from morning to night, may have consented to become so inured to physical labor as to grow blind to her spiritual needs, as to keep down all her intellectual powers, and ruin her physical health; but to woman in a natural state, this condition of things has seemed most deplorable, so



enervated has become her physical system and so blunted her holiest feelings. The beautiful faces of her children, so exalting, so cheering, must be put away out of sight; and if she be the mother of several children, she has thought she was under the necessity of sending them to school, that they might be out of the way of the drudgery imposed by her family duties. She may have been compelled to take in washing and ironing, that she may bring something into the family, and earn means for the support of her children. I say, she may have been compelled to enter upon those laborious duties of washing and ironing, or to sew for almost nothing; and at the same time, she may have had a darling infant crying continually for her attention, and yet been obliged to neglect these cries, because she knows that her task must be performed, or her means of subsistence will be lost. And who cares that she leaves these helpless children alone, liable to be burned and injured in various ways? Who cares that the poor charwoman is compelled, day after day, to leave her dependent ones in this helpless and dangerous condition, that she may earn a little towards clothing herself and her children? Do you ever hear of man making a solemn protest against woman being thus compelled to toil? Did you ever hear a minister bring out the idea that woman should be so protected that she should not be compelled to leave her children? If they were allowed a just remuneration for their labor, would they ever leave their children in this way? No, never!

I said, that no protest had ever been made, to any great extent, except by a very few reformers, against this degradation of woman, and no sympathy had been expressed for those helpless children, that she had been compelled to leave behind, for fear that they would die for want of her attention. But the moment woman occupies, or tries to occupy, another sphere—the moment she attempts to go out to preach a sermon, even though she leave those darling children every way provided for at home, the cry is raised of woman out of her proper sphere, in going forth to be a teacher of others, while those darling children are left at home without their mother. Oh, it is easy for man to have sympathy for the children, to care for the woman's little ones, when she is following the high impulses of her nature! I say, emphatically, it is time that we listened to the voice of God speaking within us. We have looked up to man to be directed in the path of right, to be told what was the course most proper for us to pursue, and he has declared that we were incapable of deciding for ourselves. I well remember, when I was a member of the church, with what reverence I looked up to the minister for my teaching. I dared not take a single step without making known my purpose to the minister. And when I was engaged in the pursuit of dress-making, and felt that that business was not my calling, when I felt that I had a call to go forth into the world for the improvement of my own sex, in which I felt a particular earnestness, I made known my views upon this subject to the minister of the parish. He said I had talents, and might make myself very useful as a teacher or as a home missionary, and that he would look about him to see if he could find an opening for me. Again and again did I go to this minister, and ask him what I should do. I constantly heard whispered in my ear, "Go and preach my gospel." I believe it was the voice of the Spirit; but I had not been

accustomed to listen to this voice, and I did not listen to it. The minister said, "When the door opens, enter; but do not force it open." And presently the Lord did open a door. I received an invitation from the Golden Rule Association to become their agent. And what was the response I met in the church? I was brought up as being accountable to the minister and the church for the course I should pursue. I pleaded the advice of the minister, that when the Lord opened a door, I should enter. "Oh," replied he, "I did not mean *such* a door;" as much as though it was for him to decide what door I should enter.

Mrs. Redlon concluded by advising woman to seek for the most perfect freedom of action, and for the highest cultivation which it was given her to reach.

At the conclusion of Miss Brown's remarks, it was announced that Mrs. E. Oakes Smith, of New York, would deliver a lecture at the commencement of the evening session, and that an admission fee of ten cents would be charged, to assist in defraying the expenses of the Convention.

The Convention then adjourned till 7 o'clock.

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## **EVENING SESSION.**

The hall was densely crowded, notwithstanding the admission fee, with an orderly and highly intelligent audience, such as it was truly inspiring to behold. The meeting was called to order by the President, and, agreeably to the announcement made at the afternoon session, Mrs. E. Oakes Smith, of New York, was introduced to the audience, and enchaind their attention for more than an hour, in an address on Womanhood, marked by a clearness of thought and felicity of expression, as well as a classical beauty of imagery and illustration, which are rarely, if ever, surpassed. It was heard with the closest attention, interrupted only by frequent bursts of applause; and at its conclusion, the talented speaker was warmly and repeatedly cheered.

Mrs. Abby Kelly Foster rose and said:—

Madam President: I rise this evening not to make a speech. I came here without any intention of even opening my mouth in this Convention. But I must utter one word of congratulation, that the cause which we have come here to aid, has given such evidence this evening of its success. When genius, that could find ample field elsewhere, comes forward and lays itself on this altar, we have no reason for discouragement; and I am not without faith that the time is not far distant, when our

utmost desires shall be gratified, when our highest hopes shall be realized. I feel that the work is more than half accomplished.

I have an idea, thrown into the form of a short resolution, which I wish to present to this Convention, because no one else has brought it forward. I feel that behind, that underneath, that deeper down than we have yet gone, lies the great cause of the difficulties which we aim to remove. We complain that woman is inadequately rewarded for her labor. It is true. We complain that on the platform, in the forum, in the pulpit, in the office of teacher, and so on to the end of the list, she does not hold that place which she is qualified to fill; and what is the deep difficulty? I cannot, I will not charge it all upon man. I respond to the statement that it is chargeable upon us as well as upon others. It is an old, homely maxim, but yet there is great force in it, "Where there's a will, there's a way;" and the reason why woman is not found in the highest position which she is qualified to fill, is because she has not more than half the will. I therefore wish to present the resolution that I hold in my hand:

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*Resolved*, That in regard to most points, Woman lacks her rights because she does not feel the full weight of her responsibilities; that when she shall feel her responsibilities sufficiently to induce her to go forward and discharge them, she will inevitably obtain her rights; when she shall feel herself equally bound with her father, husband, brother and son to provide for the physical necessities and elegances of life, when she shall feel as deep responsibility as they for the intellectual culture and the moral and religious elevation of the race, she will of necessity seek out and enter those paths of Physical, Intellectual, Moral and Religious labor which are necessary to the accomplishment of her object. Let her feel the full stimulus of motive, and she will soon achieve the means.

I believe that the idea embodied in this resolution, though not expressed so clearly as I fain would have had it, points to the great difficulty that lies in our way; and therefore, I feel that it is necessary for us to inculcate, on the rising generation especially, (for it is to these that we must chiefly look,) it is necessary for us to inculcate on them particularly this feeling of responsibility. Let mothers take care to impress upon their daughters, that they are not to enter upon the marriage relation until they are qualified to provide for the physical necessities of a family. Let our daughters feel that they must never attempt to enter upon the marriage relation until they shall be qualified to provide for the wants of a household, and then we shall see much, if not all, that difficulty which has been complained of here, removed. Women revolt at the idea of marrying for the sake of a home, for the sake of a support—of marrying the purse instead of the man. There is no woman here, who, if the question were put to her, would not say, Love is sufficient. She says it is sufficient, and she believes it; yet behind this lies something else, in more than one case in ten.

Let us therefore inculcate upon our daughters, that they should be able to provide for the wants of a family, and that they are unfit for that relation until they are qualified to do so. If we teach our daughters that they are as much bound to become independent as their brothers, and that they should not hang upon the skirts of a paternal home for support, but secure subsistence for themselves, will they not look out avenues to new employments? Why, we all feel it, we all know it; if women could be taught that the responsibilities devolved equally upon themselves and the other sex, they would seek out the means to fulfill those responsibilities. That is the duty we owe our daughters to-day; that is the duty each one owes to herself to-day, to see to it that we feel that we must enter into business, such as will bring in to the support of our families as much as the labor of our fathers, 101 husbands, and brothers does. Woman's labor is as intrinsically valuable as any other, and why is it not remunerated as well? Because, as has been shown here,—because there is too much female labor in the market, compared with the work it is allowed to undertake. There are other means of support; there are other modes of acquiring wealth: let woman seek them out, and use them for her own interest, and this evil will in great part be done away.

Then, again, let every woman feel that she is equally responsible with man for the immorality, for the crime that stalks abroad in our land, and will she not be up and doing, in order to put away that vice? Let every woman understand that it is for her to see that disease be not inflicted on the community, and will she not seek out means to do it away? If she feel that she is as competent to banish superstition, and prejudice, and bigotry, from the world as her brother, will she not be up and doing? Here is the great barrier to woman's obtaining her rights. Mary Wolstonecraft was the first woman who wrote a book on "Woman's Rights;" but a few years later, she wrote another, entitled "Woman's Duty;" and when woman shall feel her duty, she will get her rights. We, who are young on this question of Woman's Rights, should entitle our next book "Woman's Duties." Impress on your daughters their duties; impress on your wives, your sisters, on your brothers, on your husbands, on the race, their duties, and we shall all have our rights.

Man is wronged, not in London, New York, or Boston alone. Look around you here in Worcester, and see him sitting amidst the dust of his counting-room, or behind the counter, his whole soul engaged in dollars and cents, until the Multiplication Table becomes his creed, his *Pater noster*, and his Decalogue. Society says, keep your daughters, like dolls, in the parlor; they must not do anything to aid in supporting the family. But a certain appearance in society must be maintained. You must keep up the style of the household. You are in fault if your wife do not uphold the condition to which she was bred in her father's house. I put this before men. If we could look under and within the broadcloth and the velvet, we should find as many breaking hearts, and as many sighs and groans, and as much of mental anguish, as we find in the parlor, as we find in the nursery of any house in Worcester. But woman is vain and frivolous, and man is ignorant; and therefore, he is what he is.

Had his daughters, had his wife, been educated to feel their responsibilities, they would have taken their rights, and he would have been a happy and contented man, and would not have been reduced to the mere machine for calculating and getting money he now is.

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My friends, I feel that in throwing out this idea, I have done what was left for me to do. But I did not rise to make a speech—my life has been my speech. For fourteen years I have advocated this cause by my daily life. Bloody feet, sisters, have worn smooth the path by which you have come up hither. (Great sensation.) You will not need to speak when you speak by your every-day life. Oh, how truly does Webster say, Action, action, is eloquence! Let us, then, when we go home, go not to complain, but to work. Do not go home to complain of the men, but go and make greater exertions than ever to discharge your every-day duties. Oh! it is easy to be lazy; it is comfortable indeed to be indolent; but it is hard, and a martyrdom, to take responsibilities. There are thousands of women in these United States working for a starving pittance, who know and feel that they are fitted for something better, and who tell me, when I talk to them, and urge them to open shops, and do business for themselves, "I do not want the responsibility of business—it is too much." Well, then, starve in your laziness!

Oh, Madam President, I feel that we have thrown too much blame on the other side. At any rate, we all deserve enough. We have been groping about in the dark. We are trying to feel our way, and oh! God give us light! But I am convinced that as we go forward and enter the path, it will grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

I will speak no longer. I speak throughout the year, and those of you who speak but once should take the platform. I hope, however, that you do not feel that I speak to you in anger. Oh, no; it is in the hope of inducing you to be willing to assume responsibilities, to be willing to have a sleepless night occasionally, and days of toil and trouble; for he that labors shall have his reward; he that sows shall reap. My teacher in childhood taught me a lesson, which I hope I never shall forget. She had appointed me a task, and when she asked me if I had learned it, I said, "No, it is too hard." "Well," said she, "go into the road and pick me up an apron full of pebbles." I did it. "It was easy to do it," said she. "Oh, yes," I replied. "Go out again," said she, "and pour them down, and bring me in an apron full of gold." It was impossible. "Yes," said my teacher, "you can get that only by earnest labor, by sacrifice, by weariness." I learned my lesson, I accomplished my task; and I would to God that every person had had similar instruction, and learned the necessity of toil—earnest, self-sacrificing toil. (Loud cheers.)

Mrs. Marcus Spring, of Brooklyn, N. Y., said:— I do not intend to 103 make a speech. I have long believed that remunerative employment for women would remove most of the difficulties of her

present condition. I therefore rejoiced on receiving, the other day, a letter from London, stating that a new art had been invented, which promised to afford a fresh field of employment for women. Mrs. Wallace, a Scottish lady, a descendant of Sir William Wallace, who, inheriting a large estate, was brought up in the greatest luxury, has invented a decorative art in glass, of which the whole English nation are very proud, and the specimens of which covered 600 feet in the Great Exhibition. She has sent some of her work to Prince Albert, who has, in a letter, warmly expressed his admiration. She has, with the most noble generosity, offered the art to the use of women gratuitously. They have established in London a school where they teach the art. Many ladies have interested themselves in the movement, glad to find a new employment for women of cultivated minds. Miss Fox, daughter of a member of Parliament, who took lessons in drawing of the first masters in Munich, gives instruction in drawing. The School of Design in Philadelphia, the one just now established in Boston, those ladies in London, and this Woman's Convention, speak of a good work going on. But I will give you one caution: Do not work too hastily. Let the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of flame by night, go before you, and the blessing of Divine Love will rest upon you until you enter the promised land.

Mrs. Ernestine L. Rose, of New York, said:— My friends, much has been said this evening on almost all points, and I hope the truths that have been spoken will be deeply impressed upon the minds of all. Yet I wish to say a few words on the subject, or rather the origin, of Duty. Much indeed might be said to impress upon all the importance faithfully to perform the various duties devolved upon us, even if in so doing we might clash with the opinions and prejudices of others; to act fearlessly consistent with our principles and convictions, though through it we incur the risk of being unpopular. And we cannot show our desire to promote this great cause more earnestly than, not only by endeavoring to correct political and civil errors, but wherever they are found, even in the midst of us. We were told that if woman would only do her duty, she would have all her rights, implying that our rights spring from our duties. If we reflect a moment on the subject, we will find this is an error, a very prevalent error, and therefore the more necessary to be corrected. Our duties spring from our rights, our rights from our wants. The child, when it comes into existence, possesses rights arising from its necessities, but as yet it owes no duty to any one; while the parents having exercised certain rights and privileges, they 104 owe certain duties to the child, which, when grown up to understand the relation it sustains to its parents and to society then, owes in return duties in accordance with the rights and privileges it enjoys. The more rights we enjoy, the greater the duties we owe. And he who enjoys most rights, owes in return the most duties. And therefore we say to society, you, who enjoy all the rights, are in duty bound to protect every individual member in his rights. But as it is, while man enjoys all the rights, he preaches all the duties to woman. And hence we say to man—not in the spirit of censure, but charity and kindness, yet firmly do we say to him, that, instead of writing and preaching so much about the duties of woman, it is high time,

as the elder brother, to set us the example in the performance of your duties. And in no way can you better evince your earnest desire to do so, than by giving woman her rights. And depend upon it she will not fail in the performance of her duties, not only as wife and mother, but also as a free, enlightened, rational member of the great family of man, highly conducive to the elevation and happiness of all.

Mrs. Coe, of Ohio, then again took the platform, and made the concluding speech of the Convention. She said:— As I was the unfortunate instrument of introducing a subject which has been somewhat freely discussed here, permit me to say a few words in relation to it. I refer to my remarks on the influence of the purse in matrimonial connections—although the purse, poor thing, must be by this time almost threadbare. By purse, I meant simply, any other motive than that of pure affection. True, it may have been an unadvised expression, but is it any the less truthful? “Power over a person's subsistence,” says Hamilton, “is, in the main, over the will.” Well, do not men hold the purse? Have we an equal control? If so, why this long, deep, loud complaint of the wrongs of woman in this particular? Why this outcry against the poor remuneration paid for female labor—for sewing-girls, for sempstresses, for teachers? Is not this one of the very wrongs for which we seek redress? And can we deny the results of such a state of things? Can we act freely as we would in this respect? Was Hamilton wrong, or are not we rather likely to be wrong? Which is right?—judge ye. We are of the earth, earthy, and are unfortunately not yet so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the heavenly, as to be entirely free from earth's sympathies, or earthly motives. I cannot however regret having made the expression, since it has been the means of calling out a vast amount of eloquence, which I fear would otherwise have been lost to us.

We have now, my friends, met in Convention, twice in each of the 105 three great northern divisions of our country—twice in New England, twice in the Middle, and twice in the Western States.

We have not met, as some have seemed to suppose, to go into the detail of social life alone: we did not propose to petition our legislators to make our husbands just, generous, and courteous.

But we have met to protest against a form of government existing without the consent of the governed; to declare our right to be free as man is free; to be represented in that government which we are taxed to support; to have such iniquitous, unjust, and disgraceful laws as give man the right to chastise and imprison his wife—and in most of the States to take the wages which she earns, the property which she inherits—and in case of separation, the children of her love—or in case of the death of her husband, compels her to resign the guardianship of those children to another—laws which make her a mere dependent on the bounty of man—it was to protest against such unjust laws as these, to have them if possible for ever erased from our statute-books, deeming them a standing shame and disgrace to a professedly republican, Christian people in the nineteenth century,



that we met. And, strange to say, we have then and there declared our right to vote, according to the principles of the government under which we live. This right is ours; proven to be such, acknowledged to be such. Have it we must—use it we will. The pens, the fortunes, the indomitable wills of many individuals are pledged to it.

All experience proves that it is not safe to arm one party, or class, or sex, with supreme power, while the other is entirely disfranchised. It is only when man becomes so just, so generous, so true, that each one will be a law unto himself, that no statutes are required, that this can be safe. Our present statutes are a standing proof, that irresponsible power, vested in whom it may be on earth, or conferring authority upon whom it may, is unsafe. This is not such power as we seek, or claim. It is only an equal control over ourselves, our fortunes, our actions, the right to “life, liberty and happiness,” which man possesses for himself. Can this in justice be denied us? Can man be true to himself, to his own convictions of duty, to his sense of right, and adhere to the principles of justice everywhere else, but abrogate them only in the case of woman and the slave? Does it please him to be called an oppressor—an usurper? Why wound in his own house? Why throw restrictions around woman to which he would not himself submit? Is she not as safely to be trusted as he?

These laws, it is said, are made to send peace into families: be assured they are more likely to “bring a sword.” Inequality knows no peace. 106 It is ever restless, murmuring, abstracted, striving, rebellious. That which sanctifies it sanctifies wrong.

Look around you. How many happy families do you now see? Are not divorces pouring in upon us like a flood? And the more enlightened does woman become, the more numerous will be these applications, until her pecuniary independence is made at least possible, and her affections are thus left free to choose, and until in the marriage relation she is acknowledged the equal with her husband. Unquestioning submission is no part of her nature. “There is a spirit within her, and the breath of the Almighty hath given her an understanding,” and only is she tending toward her true destiny, when she seeks for knowledge, for wisdom, and for just conceptions of duty. Principle is an element of social life. Man does not estimate the sum of his happiness by broad acres and heavy purses alone, but by his power to will, to be, and to do, by his individual as well as national freedom. Indeed it is difficult to conceive how a nation can be entitled to the character of Freedom, when one half its subjects are deprived of what all intelligent men and women agree in saying are their just and natural rights.

But look at our statutes, our Constitution, and the Declaration of Independence, and mark the beautiful harmony and consistency of our political theories with our political practices! While the one declares “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” to be the inalienable right of all, and that no just government can exist without the consent of the governed, the other utterly wrests from one half its

subjects every political right. While the one declares itself the vindicator and protector of the rights of the weak and defenseless, the words scarce die upon our ears, ere we find it wresting from the weak, and placing in the hands of the strong, every right held most dear. Truly, *"the price of liberty is eternal vigilance."*

It is said there must be but one head in the family, and therefore the wife must be in subjection to the husband; and an attempt is made to support this reasoning by the analogy of our civil institutions. But I would ask gentlemen if they are willing to rest their claims for supremacy on just such grounds? If so, we have nothing more to say, except that you will give us too much advantage, more than we claim.

In our government, the President, the nominal head, is merely the executor of the laws which Congress sees fit to pass. He has no power independent of Congress. If the relation was that of husband and wife, it would be as though the wife made the laws, which the husband is bound to see executed. It is true, the President holds in his hands the veto power, but at any time that power can be annulled by the will of two thirds of the members of Congress. And by this analogy, if the will of the wife could, two thirds of it, be brought to bear against the husband, he would at last be compelled to yield. (Laughter.) So that the President holds no such relation to his family, the United States, as the husband legally holds to the domestic family. It is thus in all the minor institution of our country. The President of a Bank has no more authority over the Directors, and no more claim upon their earnings, than they upon him or his, and has only an equal vote with them; and the same is true of our literary institutions. In short, there is no analogy between the laws regulating our family relations, and those of any civil institution, in the government or under it, except that of slavery. And here, whatever the practice may be, the principle is precisely the same.

I wonder in my soul, that a government so false, so shallow in its subtleties, so crushing to womanhood and independence, should have existed so long. But, God be praised, the days of its tyranny are numbered; and if these Conventions serve to throw any light on the hollowness of its professions, we have not met in vain.

A new era dawns upon us. Its approach is heralded by a thousand harbingers. The lightning coursing the telegraphic wires; the smoke-girt steeds rushing along our iron-rimmed ruts, are but embassies of a power whose will will yet place freedom upon something more than a theoretical basis, and give equality of privileges a being as well as a name. (Great cheering.)

We must agitate. Give woman knowledge—give mankind knowledge, and their rights must follow, or the flames of justice will burst in sunder the bands of social life. There is a moral grandeur in justice sufficient, when the wronged one is once aroused, to overcome every obstacle interposed. Shut up

thus still longer the pent-up fires of inquiry, and they will burst forth with such volcanic power as to dry up the fountains of sordidness in our midst, as the fire licked up the waters of old! Shut up, did I say?—you might as well dam the Nile as she is pouring the renovated fountains of her harvests through the magnificent valleys of Egypt! You might as well attempt to shut in the rays of yon pearly moon, as she goes winding over your hill-tops, peopling with shadowy images your mountains and rich valleys! (Cheers.) The spirit of inquiry, of free discussion, is abroad, and truth may now become a more powerful weapon in the hands of the simple, beardless boy, than sophistry in the hands of the most profound metaphysician: so rapid, so sturdy are the strides of the giant Progress. So that, although we at present mourn the legal, the social, and the 108 political oppressions of woman, we yet see in the brightening future the dawns of hope. Hope, smiling seraph! the beacon-light of every benighted mind,—the rose that tinges every darkening cloud,—the mountain-rock for every incautious foothold,—the shelter from every portentous storm! Its cheering beams penetrate the miseries of life, and flood the soul with the raptures of gladdening anticipations!

Never, since the ushering in of time, has the heavy tread of Reform moved with such sure and steady celerity. The whole mass of mind is agitated, and the expiring sigh of Goethe, "Light, more light still!" has become the famishing cry of nature from man to the mollusca!

In this question, there is little room for rest on the isthmus of neutrality. He that is not for us boldly, takes ground against us. This is, as it should be. The sharper the conflict, the sooner the evil is past. We want no coward foes, no craven antagonists; much less do we want hesitating, faltering friends.

The question of Woman's Rights has been nobly put, and has thrilled throughout the veins of this young empire; and thousands of responses have been awakened in the bosoms of those inhabiting its remotest borders as well as its more central territory. Many a heart to-day, keenly alive to the importance of this matter, sends up its aspirations before Jehovah's throne, for the success of this cause; and succeed it must, or convulse a world. If truth goeth onward, we may look with certainty for its ultimate triumph.

The world is emerging into day. It is putting on the shining robes of light! Continent is shaking hand with Continent. Aggressive war is no longer popular with the best portions of civilized nations. The strifes of the gladiator and the amphitheatre have long since been banished therefrom. The blood of a brother is not now, as it once was, deemed necessary to establish the honor and prove the courage of the injured. And woman, too, is coming up. But if she lack courage to lay her hand on the young world as it is rising up before her, to enter into possession, to make it her own, to show that she has the authority of reason, that she has arrived at a knowledge of the right, if she doubt—resign herself,

pass away. She shows that she has not faith in herself; it is needful that she pass into a living tomb, that others more suggestive in thought, more efficient in action, may possess her place.

The first question to ask ourselves is, Have we faith? Dare we meet the realities that are rising up against us? If so, let us strengthen the living germ of the young existence. Faith is the basis of all inspiration and action. (Loud cheering.) No great thing can be accomplished without it. We have faith. This movement, should it be 109 crushed now, would still live. Its bleeding heart would prove the germ to new and more vigorous existence. Though dead, it would still speak. But for my part, I could not drive from myself the belief that it is destined to succeed. I believe it, because reason upholds it—because our wants require it—because the elevation, if not the very existence of the race, depends upon it. Yes, because reason upholds it. It needs no declamatory effort to sustain it. Cold, unimpassioned reason leads the way. Let us be solid, then, and firm!

To man: If you lack faith in woman, review her history, study it seriously, heartily. Take no bird's-eye glance—no slight plunge into the abyss of the past. Scan the motives upon which her conduct has ever been based. How can you fail to believe in her? And from the past deduce the future. Woman, like yourself, has in her a mystery of undeveloped power, living sources of thought. Her mission—it will dawn upon you in the fullness of light. You will believe her worthy to be your equal, and will love to believe. This is the faith you require.

Your origin is of her, you live of her, with her must die. And although you may in interest have been too long divorced, yet, if you consider your children—the fresh world in which you live, and which asks of you a life of belief—your heart will warm to her. No chicanery of old habits, no subtleties of the past, no finessing with the future, will rob you of her. Difficulties, objections, will only provoke to action. The amplitude of your nature will seek for constant companionship. You will wake up to new life, to find self-created joys, pure and steadfast. Then to all let me say:

“Do what is right! For the day-dawn is breaking, Hailing a future of Freedom and Light! Angels above you are silent notes taking Of every action! Do what is right! “Do what is right! The shackles are falling! Chains of the bondmen no longer are bright! Lightened by hope, soon they'll cease to be galling. Truth goeth onward! Do what is right! “Do what is right! Let the consequence follow! Battle for Freedom in spirit and might! And, with stout hearts, look ye forth to the morrow: God will protect you in doing what's right.”

The Resolutions previously presented by the Business Committee were again read by Mr. Phillips, and the question being taken on their adoption, they were adopted, without a dissenting vote.

On motion, the several Reports which had been offered during the sessions were accepted, and the Resolution included in the Report on Education adopted.

On motion, a Committee of two, consisting of Lucretia Mott, of Philadelphia, and Marienne Blackwell, of New York, were appointed to correspond with Mesdames Deroine and Pauline Roland, now in prison in France, whose letter had been read to the Convention.

At the conclusion of Mrs. Coe's speech, the Convention adjourned, *sine die*.

## MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES.

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